

**THE SUPERINTENDENCY: AN ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP  
ROLES AND GENDER DIFFERENCES**

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by Cynthia Leonard Martinek

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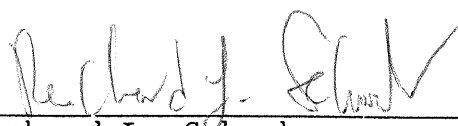
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## THE SUPERINTENDENCY: AN ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP ROLES AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

An abstract of a Dissertation by  
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The problem. Against the background of transformational leadership research indicating the need for superintendents to reexamine their leadership roles, this study describes the leadership roles superintendents currently perform, what they believe is important to their job, and the differences in perceptions of leadership roles between men and women superintendents.

Procedures. Survey methodology obtained data from a questionnaire sent to 101 female and 99 male, randomly selected, K-12 practicing superintendents across the nation. Responses from 37 males and 20 females provided usable data for descriptive analyses of superintendent leadership roles. Furthermore, there were significant differences at the .05 and .01 level of significance between the performance of managerial, instructional leadership, and transformational leadership roles using a chi-square test on 495 leadership role descriptions.

Findings. Findings indicate that male and female superintendents identify budget/finance and public relations as most important to their job. However, females also describe performing a broader array of leadership roles reflective of transformational leadership than males who describe performing managerial roles more often than females. Male and female superintendents identify an effective superintendent as a transformational leader, but indicate that board and community expectations, time, and paperwork prevent them from being a transformational superintendent. Respondents, however, describe a need for professional development related to transformational leadership: strategic planning, autonomy and interpersonal relationships, communication, consensus building, delegation, and risk taking, futuristic thinking.

Conclusion. Results of the study may help guide educational institutions that offer superintendent certification to develop transformational leadership curricula that will encourage more equal gender representation at the superintendency level by recognizing feminine leadership styles and focusing less on traditional management activities.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Theoretical Formulation

Educational leadership has attracted increased critical attention and scrutiny in recent years. A slow but observable change is occurring in the leadership of local school districts: group-centered leadership is replacing hierarchical leadership (Dolan, 1994). Site-based management teams of teachers, parents, and principals are making strategic and operational decisions regarding curriculum, budget, personnel selection, and daily procedures that were once reserved for top administrative ranks. As increasing numbers of people have become involved in school activities and decision-making, their leadership status is being earned by their actions rather than their official positions (Parks & Barrett, 1994).

Although the literature is replete with descriptions of the roles of teachers and principals in the context of this new type of management, few studies have delineated the roles of the superintendent in this leadership change. Sarbin (1954) defined a management role as "a patterned sequence of learned actions or deeds performed by a person in an interaction situation" (p. 225). Traditionally, the

role of the superintendent has been defined as the implementer of policy established by the board of education (Konnert & Augenstein, 1990). As the board's chief executive officer, the superintendent has typically performed the following leadership activities: budgeting, facility planning, public relations, and personnel management. Within the past decade, however, a new leadership rhetoric has emerged. New words have been added to the leadership literature: collaboration, customers, culture, consensus, facilitation, vision, teamwork, involvement, participation, ownership, site-based management, and strategic planning.

"Transformational leadership," a term used to describe this leadership theory, represents a more holistic approach to leadership and holds great promise for true "interaction situations" within the superintendency. Transformational leadership arises when leaders are more concerned about gaining overall cooperation and energetic participation from organization members while they perform tasks than they are in simply getting tasks performed (Mitchell & Tucker, 1992). Burns (1978), the author of the seminal work about transformational leadership, defined transformational leadership as a move from building competence to one of building commitment; from creating congenial work environments to collegial ones; from promoting isolated decision-making to developing an environment of

collaboration; and, from fostering individual cultures to creating cultures that value a sense of community.

Since Burn's writings, a number of theorists have attempted to describe the roles associated with transformational leadership. Bolman and Deal (1991) have referred to the need for leaders to work skillfully from political and symbolic frames in understanding the roles, rules, and responsibilities of the organization. Leaders operating from a political frame are advocates and negotiators who spend much of their time networking, creating coalitions, building a power base, and negotiating compromises. Leaders operating from the symbolic frame "see a chaotic world in which meaning and predictability are socially constructed and facts are interpretative rather than objective" (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 315). Symbolic leaders pay diligent attention to myth, ritual, ceremony, stories, and other symbolic forms. For example, leaders might anoint and celebrate individual and organizational accomplishments through recognition programs, establish rituals such as board agendas, establish ceremonies, encourage storytelling of the past, and establish informal communication networks (Konnert & Augenstein, 1990).

In another work describing transformational roles, Bennis and Nanus (1985) have detailed the following roles common to transformational leaders:

1. Management of attention: a compelling vision which brings others to a place they have not been before; a clear sense of outcomes, goals, and direction.
2. Management of meaning: communicating the vision; making dreams apparent to others and aligning people with these dreams.
3. Management of trust, constancy, and focus.
4. Management of self: knowing one's skills and deploying them effectively. (p. 17)

Bass and Avolio (1994) have also recognized the importance of personal affective engagement when they describe transformational leadership as the act of motivating subordinates to do more than they ever expected to do by raising their level of awareness and consciousness about the importance and value of reaching designated outcomes. They identify three roles vital to transformational leadership:

1. The leader instills pride, faith, respect; has a gift for seeing what is really important; has a sense of mission effectively articulated.
2. The leader delegates projects to stimulate and create learning experiences; treats each person with respect as an individual.
3. The leader provides ideas which result in a rethinking of old ways; the leader enables followers to look at problems from many angles and to seek creative solutions. (p. 74)

When the roles of transformational leadership delineated by Burns (1978), Bolman and Deal (1991), Kohnert and Augenstein (1990), Bennis and Nanus (1985), and Bass and Avolio (1994) that have been described above are studied as a unit, the similarity that transformational leadership bears to the feminine leadership principles proposed by Helgesen (1990) is striking. Helgesen (1990) has suggested

that the "feminine principles" of leadership include the following actions:

Engaging in principles of caring, making intuitive decisions, not getting hung up on hierarchy or all those dreadfully boring business-school management ideas; having a sense of work as being part of your life, not separate from it; putting your labor where your love is; recognizing the bottom-line should stay there--at the bottom. (pp. 38-39)

Leaders following feminine principles are not solely task driven, but more often are guided by what Gilligan (1982) has described as "an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the 'real and recognizable trouble' of this world" (p. 100).

In an extensive review of literature about women in school administration, Shakeshaft (1987) has described the feminine style of leadership by asserting that female approaches to leadership look like prescriptions for administrative behavior in effective schools. Shakeshaft concludes:

Women enter teaching with clear educational goals, supported by a value system that stresses service, caring, and relationships. Women are focused on instructional and educational issues and have demonstrated that, when in charge, they are likely to build a school community that stresses achievement within a supportive atmosphere. Women's communication and decision-making styles stress cooperation and help to facilitate a translation of the educational visions into actions. Women monitor and intervene more than men; they evaluate student progress more often; and, they manage more orderly schools. Women demonstrate the kinds of behavior that promote achievement and learning as well as high morale and commitment by staffs. (p. 200)

Shakeshaft's conclusions, then, suggest a link between feminine leadership style and transformational leadership. However, few studies have examined superintendent leadership roles from a transformational leadership perspective. The literature reveals even less about differences in the way practicing male and female superintendents perceive the leadership roles of the superintendency. Historically, men have dominated the field of leadership theory in which they have been the objects of study (Shakeshaft, 1987). As a result, the research about and resulting definitions of leadership to date have been centered around male models of achievement, competitiveness, and individual success while failing to address the female models of caring, community building, and nurturing relationships (Sergiovanni, 1992) that are also common to transformational leadership theory.

#### Statement of the Problem

Hoyle and Commission on Standards for the Superintendency (hereafter CSS) (1993), commissioned by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) to update performance standards of the superintendency, have stated that traditional management styles which stress control, order, quality, and efficiency are outmoded and ineffective (Hoyle & CSS, 1993). Superintendents who wish to lead their schools using transformational leadership must

learn new skills and behaviors. Hoyle and CSS (1993) have suggested that traditional roles which stress budgeting, facilities, and transportation be replaced with a greater emphasis on team building, shared leadership, collaboration, and instructional improvement.

Although extensive studies have been conducted on the importance of the superintendent as the educational leader (Fraser & Schoemaker, 1982; Hart, 1983; Konnert & Augenstein, 1990; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), researchers have given little attention to clearly delineating the changing roles of the superintendent and the obstacles she/he would face if he/she became a transformational leader. Moreover, few studies have investigated the relationship of gender to the transformational leadership roles of practicing superintendents.

Historically, women have faced barriers in attaining leadership positions. Over the past two decades a rapid increase in intolerance of sex discrimination has been manifested by legislative and judicial reforms. Actions such as Title IX, affirmative action programs, landmark judicial decisions regarding discrimination, and government funding sought to equalize opportunities for women have resulted. Clearly, the United States Congress and the federal and state courts have taken the position that discrimination on

the basis of sex was in violation of the Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment, while Title IX specifically has prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex in the recruitment and hiring of employees.

With such forces at work, a trend toward the approximation of equal representation by women in the superintendency should be expected. However, statistics confirm the opposite: approximately 6% of public school superintendents are women (Chase & Bell, 1994). This situation is bewildering considering that women comprise more than 70% of the nation's teachers. Furthermore, research from 1975 forward indicates that female administrators perform as well as or better than male administrators (Estler, 1975; Fishel & Pottker, 1977; Shakeshaft, 1987). In sum, not only are the ideals of sex equity not realized, but the potential of women is not being used in a profession where competent leadership is essential.

While many studies have investigated barriers to female aspirants in achieving the superintendency such as mobility, career and family, and career path, few have investigated the perceptions of male and female practicing superintendents toward the leadership roles of the superintendency. Those who do not want women to become school superintendents often base their biases upon the



argument that women aren't suited for the job (Shakeshaft, 1987). It follows that if women perform their administrative roles in a style that is different from their male counterparts, or classify roles differently than men, they may encounter an invisible "suitability" barrier in being selected for the position regardless of leadership potential or experience.

### Purpose of the Study

In response to school transformation efforts, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has called for new levels and definitions of leadership (Hoyle & CSS, 1993). To a great extent, the quality of America's schools depends on the effectiveness of school superintendents. In Professional Standards of the Superintendency, Hoyle and CSS (1993) stated:

The executives of our nation's schools have complex leadership responsibilities, and those who hold the position must be among the brightest and best our society has to offer. Their vision and performance must focus on creating schools that will inspire our children to become successful, caring Americans, capable of becoming contributing citizens of the world. The superintendency requires bold creative, energetic and visionary leaders who can respond quickly to a myriad of issues ranging from dealing with social changes, diverse student populations, and demands for equity, to improving school quality for every child and making effective use of new technologies. (p. 3)

The purpose of this study was to investigate how randomly selected K-12 superintendents view leadership

responsibilities from the perspective of their roles as educational leaders. The congruence of transformational leadership theory and subject stated superintendents' roles were analyzed in an effort to understand the roles most important to those women and men who currently are superintendents. Participants in the study completed an open-ended survey and submitted a job description document if it was available. The open-ended survey obtained descriptive data regarding respondents' perceptions of the roles of the superintendency. The job description document provided supporting data regarding roles and performance expectations.

A matrix developed from the review of the literature identifying roles of the superintendency guided a content analysis of responses to the survey. Analyses of respondents' descriptions of role performance identified emerging themes of practicing superintendents' leadership from traditional managerial roles, instructional leadership roles, transformational leadership roles, and roles considered universal to the superintendent practice. Furthermore, descriptions of the obstacles superintendents face in performing those roles provided data in understanding leadership barriers. Rank order data identified superintendent perceptions of the importance of the roles to the position and approximate amount of time

spent in performance of these roles. Further analyses identified whether differences existed between males and females in role perceptions. Analyses of demographic information regarding age, years of experience, military experience, size, and type of district provided descriptions of the personal and professional background of the participants. Descriptive statistical procedures were used in the data analysis to strengthen emerging themes.

### Research Questions

This study analyzed how practicing K-12 superintendents view the roles of the superintendency. The research questions posed by this study were:

1. What do superintendents describe as the leadership roles they perform?
2. Which leadership roles do superintendents consider most important to the successful performance of their job?
3. How do the perceptions of leadership roles differ between male and female practicing superintendents?

### Significance of the Study

Women represent less than six percent of the superintendents in public school administration (Chase & Bell, 1994). The discrepancy between what is known about

transformational leadership and the reality of representation of women in the superintendency of K-12 public schools is a paradox and is the underlying question for this study. There are important implications for theory and practice for investigating the roles of the superintendency related to gender in eliminating discrimination, planning inservice training, and developing hiring criteria. The knowledge of how practicing superintendents view their roles may be noteworthy in redefining preparation programs to focus less on traditional management activities and more on transformational leadership reflective of the contribution of team players, female and male.

#### Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were made with respect to this study:

1. The subjects responding to the instruments gave accurate and honest reports.
2. Responses to the survey and job description document reflect the position of current employment of respondents.

## Definition of Terms

### Ethic of Care

An ethic based on relatedness and responsibility in decision-making. Women focus on relationships and the needs of those involved, demonstrating an ethic of care (Gilligan, 1982).

### Feminine Leadership Principles

Leadership principles of care, intuitive decision-making, work ethic, and bottom-up management (Helgesen, 1990).

### Gender

The social, cultural and psychological aspects linked to males and females through particular social contexts. What a given society defines as masculine or feminine is a component of gender. Gender is an achieved status (Lindsey, 1990).

### Leadership

The dispositions or habits of mind and heart which determine how a leader behaves in day-to-day practice (Mojkowski, 1991).

### Managing

The act of maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangements (Cuban, 1984).

### Role

A patterned sequence of learned actions or deeds performed by a person in an interaction situation (Sarbin, 1954).

### Sex

The biological aspects of a person involving characteristics which differentiate females and males by chromosomal, anatomical, reproductive, hormonal, and other physiological characteristics. Sex is an ascribed status (Lindsey, 1990).

### Superintendent

A professional school administrator who occupies the top administrative position in a public kindergarten (or prekindergarten) through twelfth grade school district. The chief executive officer in a school district is the superintendent.

### Transformational Leadership

When leaders look for potential motives in followers, seek to satisfy higher needs, and engage the full person of the follower (Burns, 1978).

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This study investigated practicing K-12 superintendents' perceptions of the leadership roles of the superintendency. The review was limited to literature addressing the roles of the superintendency, transformational leadership as an emerging leadership style in shaping superintendents' roles, the influence of gender on leadership roles, and the influence of gender theory translated into practice when investigating the roles and experiences of women and men as superintendents.

#### Superintendent Roles

The leadership roles of the superintendent have become an increasingly important area of concern as the push for school improvement and reform moves forward. This increased attention has created demands for performance and accountability on the part of the superintendent (Konnert & Augenstein, 1990). And yet, studies analyzing the leadership roles of the superintendency have been slow to emerge.

Prior to 1982, there was a limited amount of research on the roles of superintendents related to effective leadership. Salley (1979), in a study to determine

superintendent's job priorities, illustrated the basic lack of research with the following comment:

Anyone looking at the day-to-day operation of American schools would find it difficult not to concur that the role of superintendent is crucial to their organization and administration. However, despite the role's central position within the educational enterprise, little is known about the actual job dimensions of the superintendency. (p. 1)

Since that time, the status of the superintendent has been a concern of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), but their studies have been limited in scope. In 1982, this organization published The American Superintendency, 1982: A Summary Report. This report summarized information related to the age, sex, and training of current school superintendents, but did not include information related to superintendent effectiveness (AASA, 1982).

An attempt to identify essential administrative roles was initiated by AASA in 1983. This effort resulted in the publication Guidelines for the Preparation of School Administrators (AASA, 1983). This publication initially identified a core set of superintendent roles common to administrator preparation programs which are as follows:

1. Establish and maintain a positive and open learning environment to bring about the motivation and social integration of students and staff



2. Build strong local, state, and national support for education
3. Develop and deliver an effective curriculum that expands the definitions of literacy, competency, and cultural integration to include advanced technologies, problem solving, critical thinking and communication skills, and cultural enrichment for all students
4. Develop and implement effective models/modes of instructional delivery that make the best use of time, staff, advanced technologies, community resources, and financial means to maximize student outcomes
5. Create programs of continuous improvement, including evaluation of both staff and program effectiveness as keys to student learning and development
6. Skillfully manage school system operations and facilities to enhance student learning
7. Conduct and make use of significant research as a basis for problem solving and program planning of all kinds.

In a second publication entitled Skills for Successful School Leaders commissioned by AASA, Hoyle, English, and Steff (1985) used available literature to revise the core

set of superintendent roles established in the "Guidelines" into the following eight general roles reflective of instructional leadership:

1. designing, implementing, and evaluating school climate
2. building local, state, and national support for schools
3. developing school curriculum
4. instructional management
5. staff evaluation
6. staff development
7. resource allocation
8. research, evaluation and planning

In an effort to compare these AASA-identified roles with the reality of performance, Murphy and Hallinger (1986) identified 12 effective school districts in California. Structured interviews were conducted with the superintendents of the 12 districts asking them to describe their job performances of the superintendency. This study subsequently identified six performance factors common to the superintendent's role as leader:

1. setting goals and establishing expectations and standards
2. selecting staff
3. staff supervision/evaluation

4. establishing and instructional and curricular focus
5. monitoring curriculum and instruction
6. insuring consistency in technical core operations

To validate Hoyle et al.'s (1985) study, Collier (1987) and Sclafani (1987) surveyed samples of superintendents, asking them to identify the superintendent roles most important to them and their school districts. Collier (1987) asked a sample of Texas superintendents to rank the most important superintendent roles related to school district effectiveness. His data listed their perceptions in rank order:

1. demonstrates a broad array of leadership skills
2. demonstrates sound principles of personnel administration
3. employs sound financial planning and cash flow management
4. employs principles of sound curriculum design and instructional delivery, related activities
- 6 ensures that instructional time and resources are used effectively
- 7 develops valid and reliable performance measures for instructional outcomes
8. provides for effective evaluation of teacher performance

The Sclafani (1987) study used expert nomination to select a sample of "effective" superintendents. Selected professional educators were asked to nominate those superintendents whose performance was perceived to be in the top 10% of superintendents in each state. The resulting sample of identified "effective" superintendents was asked to rank the most important superintendent roles related to school district effectiveness. A listing of the most important roles in rank order is as follows:

1. demonstrates a broad array of leadership skills
2. demonstrates sound principles of personnel administration
3. provides for effective evaluation of teacher performance
4. employs effective school/community public relations, coalition building, and related activities
5. utilizes motivation techniques
6. utilizes an array of human relations skills
7. demonstrates conflict mediation and the skills to accept and cope with controversy
8. communicates and projects an articulate position for education

"Demonstrating a broad array of leadership skills" and  
"demonstrating sound principles of personnel administration"

were the top ranked superintendent roles identified by practicing superintendents in Texas, nationally, and in the sample of "effective" superintendents. However, the identification of specific leadership roles of the superintendency that would be included within a "a broad array of leadership skills" remains unclear. Furthermore, differences in responses between female and male superintendents were not documented.

Responding to school transformation efforts, Hoyle and CSS (1993) were again commissioned by AASA to refine the standards of the superintendency. As a result, AASA published the document Professional Standards for the Superintendency (1993) which clearly delineates eight standards and consequent roles of the superintendency. Those eight standards are:

1. Leadership and district culture
2. Policy and governance
3. Communications and community relations
4. Organizational management
5. Curriculum planning and development
6. Instructional management
7. Human resource management
8. Values and ethics of leadership

The standards, grounded in AASA guidelines, were validated through extensive research and collaboration with

superintendent practitioners, professors of educational administration, researchers, and other educational professionals.

These standards reflect emerging leadership research of the past decade. The evolution of standards for superintendent performance roles has evolved from that of managerial roles (AASA, 1983) to instructional leadership (Hoyle & CSS, 1993), and most recently, to bottom-up executive leadership that encourages shared decision making among school staff, community, business, and other stakeholders (Hoyle & CSS, 1993). In the 1993 publication, the Commission clearly defined the need to rethink existing leadership practices of the superintendency by placing a greater emphasis on team building, shared leadership collaboration, and instructional improvement. The Commission also suggested the need for feminist critique inherent in studying emerging leadership ideas about values, choice, and collaboration in order to prepare and develop superintendents (Hoyle & CSS, 1993).

### Transformational Leadership

The emerging leadership research important to current and future superintendents has focused on the theory of transformational leadership. A passionate advocate of transformational leadership, Burns (1978), defined

transformational leadership in action as "when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality . . . their purposes become fused" (p. 20). Burns believed that when such leadership is in evidence, significant change can occur within organizations. For example, transformational leadership has been shown to liberate the capacities of organizational members (Conger, 1989), to increase commitment to organizational goals (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Fernandez, 1993a), to stimulate extra effort on behalf of the organization's mission, and to provide greater job satisfaction (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Bass, Waldman, Avolio, and Bebb (1987) suggested that the roles of transformational leaders might look "different" from each other depending on the particular style or approach adopted by each. They described four such approaches: charismatic, where the provision of vision and a sense of mission are paramount; inspirational, where the provision of symbols to focus efforts is apparent; intellectual stimulation, in which rational and careful problem solving is important; and/or, individualized consideration, where the treatment of each employee is particular to his/her needs. Lesourd, Tracz, and Grady (1992) added the category "visionary" to Bass's four preceding ones. In the visionary interpretation of

transformational leadership, one would see evidence of strong personal convictions, rigorous work ethic, innovative practice and a personal image of the organization in the future.

In other works (Silins, 1992; Leithwood et al., 1993a; Leithwood et al., 1993b), six practices have become associated with transformational leadership theory. These practices are defined and their effects briefly explained below:

1. Identifying and Articulating a Vision. Practices on the part of leaders aimed at identifying new opportunities for the school, as well as developing, articulating, and inspiring others with a vision of the future.
2. Providing an Appropriate Model. Practices on the part of leaders which set an example for others to follow that is consistent with the values the leaders espouse.
3. Fostering the Acceptance of the Group. Practices on the part of leaders aimed at promoting cooperation among teachers and assisting them to work together toward a common goal.
4. High Performance Expectations. Practices that demonstrate the leaders' expectations for excellence, quality, and/or high performance on the part of others.
5. Providing Individualized Support. Practices on the part of leaders that indicate that they respect others and are concerned about their personal needs.
6. Intellectual Stimulation. Practices on the part of leaders that challenge others to reexamine some of their assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed. (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990, p. 9)



Transformational leadership, then, is about vision and working with others. It is about respect for people, allowing and encouraging the growth of others. It is concerned with influencing people to work willingly for group goals. It is not as much concerned with the power of the leader as it is with empowering others; it is concerned with growth rather than control. It is shared leadership, wherein school leaders, with or without formal leadership roles, use various strategies to change the culture of the school in school improvement efforts (Brown, 1993).

### Gender and Leadership

There is an increasing number of studies which have investigated the relationship of gender to leadership style in the corporate and private sectors. However, parallel investigations of the influence of gender on educational leadership have been few (Capper, 1992; Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992). In the corporate and private sectors, the explanations for differences in leadership style among males and females have most often focused on sex-role socialization theory (Adkinson, 1981; Heller, 1982). For example, Winther and Green (1987) cited numerous studies finding that sex-role stereotypes on the part of both men and women, leaders and followers, enforced the belief that men possess characteristics commonly associated with

effective leadership. Sex-role stereotypes of "masculine" leadership characteristics such as dominant, task-oriented, structured, ambitious, self-assured, and independent have been socially associated with men, while "feminine" stereotypes of behaviors that are passive, nurturing, supportive, nonassertive, submissive, and sensitive to the needs of others have been socially associated with women (Hyman, 1980; Powell, Posner, & Schmidt, 1984; Winther & Green, 1987).

After studying the decisions of leaders, Gilligan (1982) reported that moral reasoning differed between men and women. For example, she has suggested that women focus on the needs of others and on relationships during decision making while men focus on logic and justice. Flanagan and Jackson (1993) described Gilligan's gender-based moral reasoning research:

Gilligan describes a moral universe in which men, more often than women, conceive of morality as substantively constituted by obligations and impartiality, while women more often than men, see moral requirements as emerging from the particular needs of others in the context of particular relationships. (p. 70)

Moral reasoning based on gender orientation is described by Gilligan (1982) as an ethic. The "ethic of justice" is considered to be a male ethic while an "ethic of care and response" is a female ethic (p. 174). This "ethic of care" is based on relatedness and responsibility rather than on separation and individualism. In other words, women

tend to work through decisions based on relationships and the needs of those involved. Men tend to base decisions on logic (Forbes, 1992).

In another study investigating gender differences, Miller (1989) looked at the structuring of work arrangements. The study focused on the relationship between complexity of the work performed, and how closely men and women are supervised. She found contrasting levels of supervision of women and men with similar human capital resources (education, experience, etc.), task characteristics, organizational context, role orientations, and social position. According to the study, the more complex the job, the more closely women were supervised. For men, the more complex the job, the less they were supervised. Miller concluded that there is more systematic structuring of work arrangements for men than women, and a completely different underlying logic of task structuring. Women continue to be unfairly labeled incompetent with regard to situations that require more advanced levels of responsibility.

Proposing a different view from extensive reviews of literature, Goketepe and Schneider (1988) noted that evidence of male and female differences in leader effectiveness came predominately from laboratory settings. Their study found that in laboratory situations, women

performed more relationship-oriented actions than men. Women also described themselves as more relationship-oriented on leader questionnaires. But, in studies conducted in organizational settings, Goktepe and Schneider found the sexes did not differ in the ability to perform tasks. As managers, women tended to be both task-oriented and relationship-oriented, whereas men were primarily task-oriented. Also, the women used the democratic style of leadership and the men tended to use the autocratic style.

To more closely look at leadership style in the organizational setting, Helgesen (1990) investigated how the organization is structured as a result of leadership style, describing a "web of inclusion" that relates to feminine leadership style. This "web of inclusion" is structured with the leader as the center of the web with all others within the organization radiating out from the center and connected to each other. It is based on the concept of interdependence and results from a democratic leadership style (Helgesen, 1990).

Likewise, Eagly and Johnson (1990) found that women tended to adopt a more democratic or participative style and a less autocratic or directive style than did men. Proceeding in a participative and collaborative mode in accomplishing managerial tasks may enable many female managers to win acceptance from initially skeptical

subordinates and thereby remove one barrier to effectiveness (Eagly et al., 1992).

In studies examining how leadership styles between men and women differ in the educational setting, Shakeshaft (1987) contended that differences exist in the categories of work environment, leadership, communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, not only do women have a different administrative style than do men, but the effectiveness for a female may depend upon this altered approach. Shakeshaft suggested that the female work behavior in schools might be conceptualized in the following way:

1. Relationships with others are central to all actions of women administrators. Women spend more time with people, communicate more, care more about individual differences, are more concerned with teachers and marginal students, and motivate more.

2. Teaching and learning are the major foci of women administrators. Women administrators are more instrumental in instructional learning than men and they exhibit greater knowledge of teaching methods and techniques . . . academic achievement is higher in schools and districts in which women are administrators.

3. Building community is an essential part of a woman administrator's style. From speech patterns to decision making styles, women exhibit a more democratic, participatory style that encourages inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness in schools.

4. Marginality overlays the daily worklife of women administrators. Token status and sexist attitudes toward women combine to create a world in which the woman administrator is always on display and always vulnerable to attack. Whether the assault actually occurs is less important than the knowledge that it is always possible.

5. The line separating the public world from the private is blurred. Women are more likely to behave similarly whether in public sphere or a private one. Men, on the other hand, most often have two very different ways of behaving depending upon whether they are in the privacy of their home or in the public space of work. This lack of separation between the two worlds for women results in behavior that men often label as inappropriate. (p. 197)

Shakeshaft has further identified the male-centered ideology of androcentrism or patriarchy as the underlying cause of all barriers for females. She suggested that a male-dominant culture has been the major barrier to females. Barriers can be linked to a society that supports and enforces male superiority and a masculine value system in which female values, experiences, and behaviors are viewed as inferior.

Because the concept of feminine leadership style has developed only within the last decade, information regarding how this leadership style differs from others is still evolving. Based upon the theoretical discussions of the effectiveness of transformational leadership, which relies heavily on collegiality, group decision making, collaboration, concern for relationships, and of feminine principles which espouse an ethic of care and inclusions, one can trace certain relationships between transformational leadership and feminine styles of leadership.

### Women and Men as Superintendents

The literature on women who have attained the superintendency suggests a myriad of challenges facing the female educator in administrative leadership. In a biographical account from her perspective as Chicago's superintendent of schools in 1909, Ella Flagg Young predicted that women would soon predominate in school administration. Young based her prediction on the premise that education is a woman's natural field, and women would not be satisfied doing the larger part of the work while being denied its leadership. However, Hansot and Tyack (1981) have described the golden age for women school administrators as a dream deferred. Current studies suggest that the dream has not yet arrived even though women continue to dominate the education field. For the majority of positions available, women have failed to overcome gender barriers in claiming their share in administrative leadership via the superintendency.

Efforts to understand the relationship between gender and school administration have usually focused on explaining the limited numbers of women administrators. In 1994 6% of the superintendents were women (Chase & Bell, 1994). Other research has focused on differences between men and women in single role occupations, career path, stereotyping, and

mentorship. These role issues, however, are moot given the background and performance of current women superintendents who have greater classroom experience, have been higher achievers than men academically, and are viewed by their staffs as slightly stronger than males on many dimensions of leadership (Estler, 1975; Fishel & Pottker, 1977; Shakeshaft, 1987).

Eagly et al. (1992) reviewed studies regarding research into sex differences and leadership style in schools. Their review was specific to studies that had analyzed the three most frequently researched aspects of leadership style: interpersonal orientation, task orientation, and participative vs. directive decision making. Their synthesis indicated that the most substantial sex difference was the tendency for female superintendents to lead in a more democratic and less autocratic style than did male administrators. Women tended to act in a collegial manner and actively extended invitations to others to participate in decision making. There was negligible evidence of differences in either interpersonal orientation or task orientation.

In another study examining the differences and similarities in how women and men administrators view the competency demands of their jobs, Estler (1987) administered the Maine School Administrator Competency Survey, 1986, to



all superintendents in the state. The response rate was 66% of all superintendents (100% of female superintendents responded). While most results were statistically insignificant, women demonstrated higher perceived competency demands across administrative roles. The few areas in which women scored significantly higher than men were on people-related and cognitive competencies and attributes (conceptualization skills, group decision making, and analysis/problem-solving skills) while the areas in which men were scored significantly higher were related to "things" (facilities, management, computer usage, and collective bargaining) and conflict.

To further identify if female superintendents had preferences for specific administrative competencies, Frasher, Frasher, and Hardwick (1982) surveyed 131 female superintendents. The responses reflected a preference related to teaching and interpersonal relations; most of which were "very comfortable" with curriculum and instruction, supervision, human relations, public relations, and personnel administration. Additionally, the respondents were also "very comfortable" with decision making, budget, and finance. They were "least comfortable" with risk-taking, law, buildings, and facilities. Frasher et al. further found that the superintendents reflected a more traditional orientation during childhood, youth, and early career

development and appeared to have integrated masculine modes of behavior as they advanced to higher levels of authority and responsibility.

While the previous studies (Eagly et al., 1992; Estler, 1987; Frasher et al., 1982) indicate that women superintendents can and do feel comfortable in the superintendency and they have recognized that certain aspects of traditional management behaviors must be acquired to assume leadership positions, women have not found it necessary to forego the feminine principles of leadership (Helgesen, 1990) in order to become successful leaders. And yet, the absence of women in the superintendency continues to be a question.

Two decades ago Kanter (1977) suggested that the paucity of females in top executive positions was attributed to the structural niches of the organization affecting power, opportunity, and proportions. She argued that women are negatively affected in the distribution of power, opportunity, and numbers. In terms of formal structure, the female administrator would have greater formal power and opportunity than female and male teachers in the same organization. However, relative to administrative peers, the female superintendent is by definition a numerical minority in proportion that becomes increasingly small as grade levels or hierarchical levels increase in the district.

Kanter's theory suggests that one would expect to see gender differences in behavior across roles as a function of the proportion of women at each level. As a result, majority group members (male) are assumed to be competent until proven otherwise, while numerical minorities (female)--those who are different than the norm--are considered less competent unless proven otherwise.

A study by Schuster and Foote (1990) would suggest that not much has changed in 13 years. Schuster and Foote (1990) explained that the small percentage of females in the superintendency may lie in the "old boy" network that has been fundamentally grounded in sports. In this arena, the members may share common experiences, interests, jargon, team leadership, and interaction styles. This network may facilitate the advancement of men and present little hope to women. The "network" theory forwarded by Schuster and Foote (1990) resulted from self-reports of 792 male and 191 female superintendents nationally as they sought to examine why women hold only 4% of the nation's local school superintendencies, 23% of the deputy or assistant superintendencies, 12% of the secondary school principalships, and 29% of the elementary school principalships. In other findings, Schuster and Foote (1990) found that women superintendents report higher IQs, more graduate school, more extensive memberships in professional

organizations, and more experience in the classroom. In addition to these professional attributes, women superintendents head wealthier districts, have more females on their school boards, and work longer hours.

In examining how "gatekeepers," school board members and consultants, view the female superintendent roles and subsequent actions, Chase and Bell (1990) argued that the gatekeepers' explanation and description of women's actions and situations contributes to the persistence of men's dominance of positions of power. Their argument was based upon stereotyping assumptions of female behavior. These data were drawn from in-depth interviews of 27 women who were K-12 superintendents across the nation. In addition, 50 gatekeepers, 44 school board members (32 men, 12 women) and 6 consultants (5 men, 1 woman) were interviewed. They found that most of the gatekeepers are positively disposed toward women as educational leaders. However, they found that the gatekeepers discourse supported men's dominance of position of power by failing to understand women's experiences and how those experiences are expressed. Chase and Bell's data suggested that if the favored perception toward women by the gatekeepers were coupled with recognizing and rethinking personal ideology and discourse, female superintendency candidates may be able to break the barriers of male dominance.

Reflection upon these findings suggests that women superintendents may be more successful in certain districts. A study by Sharatt and Townley (1991) investigated why administrative candidates applied for some leadership openings and not others. Female applicants sought positions in districts that actively recruited females, provided professional growth, offered competitive salaries, allowed for a greater degree of autonomy, and had a "proactive" board of directors. Other factors that were considered were geographical location, quality of life associated with the new location, and greater status found in the new position. Sharatt and Derrington (1993) expanded the research to identify the characteristics of a district that encouraged females to apply and the identified barriers which prevented females from attaining the superintendency. Their findings suggested five common attributes of a district which is likely to "attract" or have a "strong" influence on a female's willingness to apply for the superintendency. In rank order, they are:

1. A good match between the district needs, candidate's skills, and abilities
2. Stable, visionary, proactive board
3. Ability to implement new programs
4. Stable financial outlook for the district
5. Potential for district success is good

To the extent that institutions and the gatekeepers, who encourage women superintendents to apply for superintendencies, reflect the absence of discrimination on the basis of sex, women superintendents should expect to experience challenges in overcoming the strength of cultural traditions, the slowness of institutional change, and the "old boys' network" which have historically presented steep barriers for highly qualified women.

### Summary

Only within the last two decades has leadership from a feminine perspective come to the forefront. Prior to 1974, the literature was almost exclusively dominated by masculine approaches. Theory, research, and training programs for leadership of the superintendency have generally excluded female perspectives. Now, more than ever before, a new style of leadership is being called for in today's schools emphasizing team work, collaboration, vision, and instructional improvement. Therefore, the implications for analyzing the roles of the superintendent from a transformational leadership perspective would contribute the knowledge necessary to ensure that quality schools are responsive to the challenges of the next century. Moreover, the roles that women and men superintendents perform as transformational leaders will become more critical in

validating feminine leadership principles and eliminating barriers to women in educational leadership.

## Chapter 3

### METHOD

#### Introduction

The major purpose of the study was to analyze the leadership roles reported by practicing K-12 public school superintendents. A secondary purpose was to find to what extent, if any, women superintendents practiced leadership roles differently than men. Accordingly, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. What do superintendents describe as the leadership roles they perform?
2. Which leadership roles do superintendents consider most important to the successful performance of their job?
3. How do the perceptions of leadership roles differ between male and female practicing superintendents?

#### Study Design

The majority of this descriptive study used a design focused on identifying perceptions of leadership roles held by randomly selected K-12 public school superintendents. The initial portion of the study discovered elements which were tested for significance through the following null hypothesis, evaluated at the .05 level of significance:



There is an equal performance of managerial, instructional leadership, and transformational leadership roles by superintendents. The second part of the study addressed research questions two and three by describing opinions and relationships, not testing them.

### Procedure

The researcher used a mailed survey questionnaire to collect data. The descriptive survey methodology was appropriate as it explored a variety of relationships in a timely and relatively economical manner through data obtained from attitudes, feelings, or reactions of the respondents. However, a major disadvantage to this technique was that the data are susceptible to distortion through the introduction of bias. Therefore, procedures used in this study addressed minimizing bias throughout the research process.

### Sampling Procedures

The population of this study consisted of the 1994-1995 membership of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). The AASA organization supplied the list of names and addresses of participants for this study. The 1994-1995 membership included K-12 district and county superintendents, assistant superintendents, curriculum

directors, vocational-technical school directors, educational service unit superintendents, and state department superintendents.

The participants in this study were drawn randomly from the population of the American Association of School Administrators' national membership. AASA generated a list of 2,000 names and addresses from the 14,000 membership roster through random sampling procedures. The researcher then excluded women and men whose titles identified them in a position other than a K-12 superintendent. When reviewing the 2,000 names, the researcher identified 101 women whose address label suggested a K-12 superintendent. Using a table of random numbers, the researcher identified 99 men from the same list to be included in the study whose address label likewise suggested a K-12 superintendent. The final sample selected was 200 participants,  $N = 200$ , using this stratified random sampling procedure.

### Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was a survey designed by the researcher and her major professor to identify superintendent perceptions of leadership roles (Appendix). The survey consisted of two parts:

1. Demographic data of the respondents:
  - . State

- . Enrollment of the district
- . Number of schools in the district
- . Grade span of students in the district
- . Type of district, i.e., urban, rural, suburban
- . Age
- . Sex
- . Highest educational level
- . Military experience
- . Years of administrative experience
- . Years of classroom experience
- . Average number of hours/week on the job

2. Perceptions of leadership roles. This section asked respondents to complete the following responses:

- (a) identify up to ten leadership roles they perform;
  - (b) rank order the top five roles in order of importance to their job, from 1 being the most important to 5, and the amount of time spent performing the roles;
  - (c) rank order the top five roles, from 1 being the most important to 5, they would prefer to perform;
  - (d) identify what prevents them from performing that role;
  - (e) describe an effective superintendent;
  - (f) describe what prevents them from being effective;
  - (g) identify up to two areas critical for professional development.
- Respondents were also asked to return a job description if available.

### Characteristics of the Instrument

Before administering the instrument to the participants, the researcher sought to establish the validity and utility of the instrument. Consultation with research specialists at Drake University served to establish content and face validity. Appropriate content for the instrument developed from the research questions and their suggestions. To confirm the validity of the instrument, six male superintendents of Northern Trails Area Education Agency, who have been involved in transformational leadership activities, served as subjects for a pilot test during the spring of 1995. In addition, five female superintendents in the state of Iowa responded to the pilot instrument. Suggestions for revision included statements related to wording, length of the survey, clarity and specificity of the instructions, and response format. After revisions, the researcher submitted the survey (Appendix) and a brief description of the procedures to the Drake University Human Subjects Review Committee which approved the study.

### Collection of Data

The survey (Appendix) was mailed to the potential participants on April 15, 1995. A cover letter explained the purpose and objectives of the study. A self-addressed

prepaid envelope, included in the mailing, provided for returns. The researcher assigned a code number (01-200) to each individual and marked the top right hand corner of each survey to identify non-respondents and conduct follow-up procedures. Upon receipt of the return survey, the researcher marked the participant list to indicate return of the survey.

The returned mailings yielded 93 responses (46%) of which 66 (33%) had usable data. The first mailing yielded 61 returns within 21 mailing days. Of the 61 returns, 51 had usable data and 10 had no data, but indicated reasons for non-participation. Those reasons included (a) no time, (b) office closed, (c) non- superintendent, (d) elected official, and (e) superintendent of an organization other than a K-12 district. A second survey sent to non-respondents on May 6, 1995, yielded 20 returns of which 15 had usable data and 5 had no data with similar reasons for non-participation. Twelve surveys were returned with a non-delivered message because of no forwarding address. The final sample included 37 males and 29 females.

The lower response rate may be attributed to the descriptive nature of the research using a mailed questionnaire that is an impersonal probe. To increase response rate, notification of sponsorship, cover letter,

limited page questionnaire, follow-up, and stamped return postage were included in the procedures of this study. However, this study was designed to include a national sample in which personalization (Yu & Cooper, 1983) was limited. Results from census pretesting (Riche, 1987) indicated there are significant geographic differences in response rates due to regional as well as metropolitan versus rural respondents. Likewise, Goyder (1982) suggested that response rates are related to cultural and subcultural (e.g. Hispanics, Afro-American) differences: variables that were not addressed in this study. In another study, Yammarino, Skinner, and Childers (1991) suggested that response rates in mailed surveys are affected by situational factors, knowledge, expertise, and individual personality characteristics. These factors were accounted for in respondents' reasons for non-participation in this study.

### Analysis of Data

The majority of this study was descriptive in nature. The researcher used descriptive statistics, frequency counts and percentages, and chi-square where appropriate to strengthen the emerging descriptions of leadership role perceptions and the significance of those descriptions. For the purpose of this study, the researcher followed the

following chronological sequence of data analysis (Babbie, 1973):

1. Organizing, coding, and editing the data. The researcher organized the data topically, reviewing and noting questions and comments. Data was categorized into three areas: managerial, instructional leadership, and transformational leadership roles.

2. Generating conceptual categories. Categorizing, a form of content analysis, aided the researcher in identifying the prominent themes from the data that have meaning for the researcher participants. The researcher used an intuitive process to determine whether a description felt like another; that is, whether the content of one description was significantly alike another to place in the same category. For example, "developing a budget" and "responsible for the district's finances" were enough alike to be entered under the same category. The researcher entered units in the computer for the purpose of categorizing the data.

3. Cleaning the data. The researcher approached the data with skepticism in order to ensure credibility and usefulness. The researcher searched through the data by computer to sort out the categories developed from the data. During this process, questions were noted during the coding.

To check the coding, three staff members of Northern Trails Education Agency who have been involved in transformational leadership coded the data independently on a random sample (N = 24) of returned surveys. These separate codings yielded an overall interrater agreement of 84%. In addition, a superintendent who was invited to participate in the pilot study independently reviewed the coding for an interrater agreement of 87%.

4. Constructing scales or indexes. The researcher constructed a format to identify the importance of leadership roles to respondents from 1 being the most important to 5 being the least important. In response to the descriptive questions, it was determined that the presentation of data would follow the most frequently mentioned response.

5. Conducting statistical analysis. As a test of external validity, the chi-square test for goodness of fit was used to compare the observed frequencies of performance role categories with the theoretical expected frequencies of reported role performance. The researcher also analyzed the descriptive data through descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages to identify the extent to which differences exist in leadership roles between male and female superintendents.



5. Writing the report by documenting the procedures used to code, clean, scale, and analyze the data. The researcher reported the data by summarizing the descriptive data to link theory and practical application of the research findings.

### Limitations

The study had the following limitations:

1. The survey was limited in its scope and may not have identified the full range of perceptions about the issues related to the topic
2. The data represented the perceptions of superintendents at the time of data collection
3. The generalizability of the study is limited by the response number and location of respondents.

## Chapter 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

Data were collected through survey methodology from participants in a study of leadership roles as reported by practicing K-12 public school superintendents. The findings of this study are presented in five sections:

Demographic Data of Respondents

Leadership Roles

Importance of Leadership Roles

Perceptions of What Constitutes an Effective  
Superintendent

Professional Development Needs

#### Demographic Data of Respondents

Demographic data from the survey instrument were tabulated and compiled into tables. The distribution of the sample in Table 1 shows that respondents represented 22 of the 50 states. The greatest percentage of respondents, 12%, were from the states of Alabama and Arizona respectively. Fourteen other states also had more than one respondent.

Table 1

Percentages of Superintendents by State

State	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Alaska	3	5%	1	2%	4	6%
Alabama	5	8%	3	5%	8	12%
Arkansas	1	2%	--	0%	1	2%
Arizona	4	6%	4	6%	8	12%
California	2	3%	1	2%	3	5%
Iowa	2	3%	--	0%	2	3%
Illinois	1	2%	--	0%	1	2%
Maine	1	2%	--	0%	1	2%
Michigan	3	5%	--	0%	3	5%
Mississippi	1	2%	--	0%	1	2%
Montana	--	0%	5	8%	5	8%
Nebraska	1	2%	2	3%	3	5%
New Hampshire	1	2%	--	0%	1	2%
New Jersey	1	2%	1	2%	2	3%
New York	2	3%	2	3%	4	6%
North Dakota	--	0%	1	2%	1	2%
Ohio	3	5%	3	5%	6	9%
Oklahoma	2	3%	2	3%	4	6%
Oregon	2	3%	2	3%	4	6%
Tennessee	--	0%	1	2%	1	2%
Texas	2	3%	--	0%	2	3%
Virginia	--	0%	1	2%	1	2%

The data in Table 2 reveal that 14% of male respondents were from Alabama while Montana had the most female

Table 2

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents by State

State	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
Alaska	3	8%	1	3%
Alabama	5	14%	3	10%
Arkansas	1	3%	--	0%
Arizona	4	11%	4	14%
California	2	5%	1	3%
Iowa	2	5%	--	0%
Illinois	1	3%	--	0%
Maine	1	3%	--	0%
Michigan	3	8%	--	0%
Mississippi	1	3%	--	0%
Montana	--	0%	5	17%
Nebraska	1	3%	2	7%
New Hampshire	1	3%	--	0%
New Jersey	1	3%	1	3%
New York	2	5%	2	7%
North Dakota	--	0%	1	3%
Ohio	3	8%	3	10%
Oklahoma	2	5%	2	7%
Oregon	2	5%	2	7%
Tennessee	--	0%	1	3%
Texas	2	5%	--	0%
Virginia	--	0%	1	3%

respondents, 17%. Male respondents were not represented in four states: Montana, North Dakota, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Responses were not obtained from females in eight states: Arkansas, Iowa, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, and Texas. Thus, the data provided no comparison by gender and location.

The data in Table 3 showed that the greatest percentage of responses, 20%, were from respondents in district size of 1,000 to 1,999 followed closely by 17% of respondents from district size of 600 to 999. Only 5% of respondents represented districts of 25,000 or more.

Table 3

Percentages of Superintendents by District Size

Enrollment	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
25,000 or more	1	2%	2	3%	3	5%
10,000 to 24,999	5	8%	2	3%	7	11%
5,000 to 9,999	6	9%	4	6%	10	15%
3,000 to 4,999	--	0%	3	5%	3	5%
2,000 to 2,999	3	5%	2	3%	5	8%
1,000 to 1,999	7	11%	6	9%	13	20%
600 to 999	6	9%	5	8%	11	17%
300 to 599	7	11%	2	3%	0	14%
299 and less	2	3%	2	3%	4	6%
NA	--	0%	1	2%	1	2%

When the percentages of respondents were further analyzed by gender, the data in Table 4 revealed that more females, 66%, represented districts of 1,000 or greater compared to males, 52%, who represented districts of 1,000 or greater.

Table 4

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents by District Size

Enrollment	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
25,000 or more	1	3%	2	7%
10,000 to 24,999	5	14%	2	7%
5,000 to 9,999	6	16%	4	14%
3,000 to 4,999	--	0%	3	10%
2,000 to 2,999	--	0%	2	7%
1,000 to 1,999	7	19%	6	21%
600 to 999	6	16%	5	17%
300 to 599	7	19%	2	7%
299 and less	2	5%	2	7%
NA	--	0%	1	3%

District size was also related to the number of buildings in the district. The data in Table 5 indicated that an equal percentage, 18%, of males and females had 3 to

5 buildings in the district. Those responses reporting 2 and less buildings, 17%, were all from male respondents.

Table 5

Percentages of Superintendents by Number of Schools in District

Number of Schools	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
25 or more	3	5%	6	9%	9	14%
18 to 24	4	6%	1	2%	5	8%
12 to 23	5	8%	4	6%	9	14%
6 to 11	2	3%	5	8%	7	11%
3 to 5	12	18%	12	18%	24	36%
2 and less	11	17%	--	0%	11	17%
NA	--	0%	1	2%	1	2%

The data in Table 6 showed that the greatest percentage of males, 32%, and females, 41%, had 3 to 5 buildings in the district. In addition, more females, 21%, had 25 or more schools in the district as compared to 8% of males, whereas 30% of the males had 2 and less buildings compared to no, 0%, females. This data was consistent with the data in Tables 4 and 5 where females were from larger districts.

Table 6

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents by Number of Schools in District

Number of Schools	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
25 or more	3	8%	6	21%
18 to 24	4	11%	1	3%
12 to 23	5	14%	4	14%
6 to 11	2	5%	5	17%
3 to 5	12	32%	12	41%
2 and less	11	30%	--	0%
NA	--	0%	1	3%

The data in Table 7 indicated that the greatest percentage, 55%, of respondents were from PreK-12 districts, followed by respondents from K-12 districts, 33%. Those indicating a different grade span identified a PreK(K)-8, 9%, and a PreK(K)-9, 2%, organizational structure. No responses were obtained from superintendents from 9-12 districts.

When gender was compared by the grade span of the district, the data (see Table 8) showed that 65% of the male responses were from the PreK-12 districts as compared to 41% of the females. More females, 17%, were from districts with



a PreK(K)-8 or PreK(K)-9 organizational structure than males, 5%.

Table 7

Percentages of Superintendents by Grade Span of Students in District

Grade Span	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
PreK-12	24	36%	12	18%	36	55%
K-12	11	17%	11	17%	22	33%
PreK (K-8)	2	3%	4	6%	6	9%
9-12	--	0%	--	0%	--	0%
Other	--	0%	1	2%	1	2%
NA	--	0%	1	2%	1	2%

Table 8

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents by Grade Span of Students in District

Grade Span	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
PreK-12	24	65%	12	41%
K-12	11	30%	11	38%
PreK (K-8)	2	5%	4	14%
9-12	--	0%	--	0%
Other	--	0%	1	3%
NA	--	0%	1	3%

The data in Table 9 showed that the greatest percentage, 80%, of respondents were from rural schools. Only 3% of the respondents were from urban schools.

Table 9

Percentages of Superintendents by Type of District

District Type	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Urban	1	2%	1	2%	2	3%
Suburban	5	8%	5	8%	10	15%
Rural	31	47%	22	33%	53	80%
NA	--	0%	1	2%	1	2%

Likewise, the data in Table 10 indicated that the greatest percentage of male respondents, 84%, and female respondents, 76%, were from rural schools.

Table 10

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents by Type of District

District Type	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
Urban	1	3%	1	3%
Suburban	5	14%	5	17%
Rural	31	84%	22	76%
NA	--	0%	1	3%

The data in Table 11 revealed that 41% of the respondents were ages 40 to 49, 53% were from 50 to 59, 5% were from 60 to 69, and 2% were over the age of 70. No responses were obtained from respondents who were less than 40 years old.

Table 11

Percentages of Superintendents by Age

Age	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
< 40	--	0%	--	0%	--	0%
40 to 49	16	24%	11	17%	27	41%
50 to 59	20	30%	15	23%	35	53%
60 to 69	1	2%	2	3%	3	5%
> 70	--	0%	1	2%	1	2%

When responses of males and females were compared, the data in Table 12 indicated that 43% of the males and 38% of the females were ages 40 to 49. There was little difference between males and females in the age 50 to 59 category, 54% and 52% respectively. Seven percent (7%) of the females were 60 to 69 as compared to 3% of the males. One female respondent (3%), indicated an age of 70 or greater. However, there was little difference between the average ages of 52 for males and 53 for females.

Table 12

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents by Age

Age	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
< 40	--	0%	--	0%
40 to 49	16	43%	11	38%
50 to 59	20	54%	15	52%
60 to 69	1	3%	2	7%
> 70	--	0%	1	3%

The data in Table 13 indicated that 12% of the respondents held a county superintendency. Respondents noted this position in the survey returns. Of these respondents, 75% were female and 25% were male. Respondents also indicated that the county superintendency was either an elected position or connected with county government for the purpose of overseeing school managerial tasks.

Table 13

Percentages of Superintendents by District or County

Sex	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
District superintendent	35	60%	23	40%	58	88%
County superintendent	2	25%	6	75%	8	12%

When males were compared with females, the data in Table 14 revealed that 5% of males and 21% of females were county superintendents.

Table 14

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents by District or County

Sex	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
District superintendent	35	95%	23	79%
County superintendent	2	5%	6	21%

The data in Table 15 showed that advanced degrees were important to the superintendency. Respondents reported holding Superintendent's Certification or 6th year program, 32%, and a Ph.D. or Ed.D., 36%. Only 3% of the respondents had a Bachelor's degree, and 8% had a Master's degree. The two respondents with a Bachelor's degree indicated that they were county superintendents.

When the degrees held by males and females were compared, the data in Table 16 indicated that 38% of the females received Superintendent's Certification or 6th year program as compared to 27% of males. Thirty two percent (32%) of males earned an Educational Specialist degree as compared to 7% of the females. A greater percentage of

females (41%) earned a Ph.D. or Ed.D. as compared to 32% of males with a similar degree.

Table 15

Percentages of Superintendents by Attainment of Educational Degree

Educational degree	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Bachelor's	--	0%	2	3%	2	3%
Master's superintendent certification	3	5%	2	3%	5	8%
Educational specialist	10	15%	11	17%	21	32%
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	12	18%	12	18%	24	36%

Table 16

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents by Attainment of Educational Degree

Educational degree	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
Bachelor's	--	0%	2	7%
Master's	3	8%	2	7%
Superintendent certification	10	27%	11	38%
Educational specialist	12	32%	2	7%
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	12	32%	12	41%

Respondents identified the years of service in the military and previous administrative experience. The data in Table 17 revealed that 79% of the respondents had no military experience. Of the 21% of respondents who indicated they had served in the military, 9 respondents served 1 to 5 years, 3 served 6 to 10 years, and 2 served 10 years or more. The average length of service for those respondents was 8 years.

Table 17

Percentages of Superintendents Who Have Served in the Military

Military Experience	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
No	23	35%	29	44%	52	79%
Yes	14	21%	--	0%	14	21%
If yes, number of years						
1 to 5	9		--			
6 to 10	3		--			
> 10 years	2		--			

Whereas 21% of the male respondents indicated that they had military experience, the data in Table 18 showed that no females (0%) were in the military.

Table 18

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents Who Have Served in the Military

Military Experience	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
No	23	62%	29	100%
Yes	14	38%	--	0%
If yes, number of years				
1 to 5	9		--	
6 to 10	3		--	
> 10 years	2		--	

Experience in an administrative position such as superintendent or principal also influences the performance of leadership roles. The data in Table 19 indicated that 58% of respondents served in the district from 1 to 4 years, 23% from 5-8 years, 9% from 9-12 years, 3% from 13 to 16 years, and 8% from 16 or more years. Respondents also reported other administrative experience in a superintendency in another district: 15% served from 1 to 4 years, 9% served 5-8 years, 8% served 9-12 years, 3% served 13-16 years, and 5% served 16 years or more. Service as an assistant superintendent included: 17% served 1 to 4 years, 9% served 5-8 years, 2% served 9-12 years, and 0% served 13 years or more. The principalship accounted for administrative



experience with 24% served from 1 to 4 years, 18% from 5-8 years, 17% from 9-12 years, 3% from 13 to 16 years, and 5% from 16 years or more. Respondents indicated holding other administrative positions. Examples included head teacher, curriculum director, and assistant principal. Those serving in this capacity included 18% of respondents who indicated service of 1 to 4 years, 12% of 5-8 years, 8% of 9-12 years, 3% of 13 to 16 years. This data suggested that most respondents had some type of prior administrative experience.

When the percentages of male and female superintendents were compared by years of administrative experience, the average length of years in the superintendency in the present district was 4.66 years for females and 6.66 years for males. The data in Table 20 showed that a greater percentage of males were with the district for 9 or more years. More males, 62%, served in other districts as superintendents than females, 10%. The average length of years service in other districts was 4.33 for females and 7.74 for males. However, a greater percentage of females, 34%, served as an assistant superintendent than did males (25%). The average length of years service for females as assistant superintendent was 4.81 years and 5.6 years for

Table 19

Percentages of Superintendents by Years of Administrative Experience

Years of Administrative Experience	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
In present district						
1-4 years	19	29%	19	29%	38	58%
5-8 years	8	12%	7	11%	15	23%
9-12 years	5	8%	1	2%	6	9%
13-16 years	1	2%	1	2%	2	3%
> 16 years	4	7%	1	2%	5	8%
In other districts as superintendent						
1-4 years	10	15%	--	0%	10	15%
5-8 years	4	6%	2	3%	6	9%
9-12 years	4	6%	1	2%	5	8%
13-16 years	2	3%	--	0%	2	3%
> 16 years	3	5%	--	0%	3	5%
Assistant superintendent						
1-4 years	4	6%	7	11%	11	17%
5-8 years	3	5%	3	5%	6	9%
9-12 years	1	2%	--	0%	1	2%
13-16 years	1	2%	--	0%	--	0%
> 16 years	--	0%	--	0%	--	0%
Principal						
1-4 years	9	14%	7	11%	16	24%
5-8 years	8	12%	4	6%	12	18%
9-12 years	8	12%	3	5%	11	17%
13-16 years	2	3%	--	0%	2	3%
> 16 years	1	2%	2	3%	3	5%
Other						
1-4 years	9	14%	3	5%	12	18%
5-8 years	3	5%	5	8%	8	12%
9-12 years	1	2%	4	6%	5	8%
13-16 years	2	3%	--	0%	2	3%
> 16 years	--	0%	--	0%	--	0%

males. Males served more years as a principal (76%) than females (51%). A comparison of the average length of years service for females and males was 7.31 and 6.96 years, respectively. Females had an average length of years service in another type of administrative position such as curriculum director, assistant principal, or head teacher of 7.12 years while males averaged 5.97 years.

An analysis of classroom experience in Table 21 showed that all respondents had 1 or more years of classroom experience: 21% from 1 to 4 years, 24% from 5 to 8 years, 27% from 9 to 12 years, 11% from 13 to 16 years, 11% from 16 to 20 years, and 6% with 20 years or more.

Table 20

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents by Years of Administrative Experience

Years of Administrative Experience	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
In present district				
1-4 years	19	51%	19	66%
5-8 years	8	22%	7	24%
9-12 years	5	14%	1	3%
13-16 years	1	3%	1	3%
> 16 years	4	11%	1	3%
In other districts as superintendent				
1-4 years	10	27%	--	0%
5-8 years	4	11%	2	7%
9-12 years	4	11%	1	3%
13-16 years	2	5%	--	0%
> 16 years	3	8%	--	0%
Assistant superintendent				
1-4 years	4	11%	7	24%
5-8 years	3	8%	3	10%
9-12 years	1	3%	--	0%
13-16 years	1	3%	--	0%
> 16 years	--	0%	--	0%
Principal				
1-4 years	9	24%	7	24%
5-8 years	8	22%	4	14%
9-12 years	8	22%	3	10%
13-16 years	2	5%	--	0%
> 16 years	1	3%	2	7%
Other				
1-4 years	9	24%	3	10%
5-8 years	3	8%	5	17%
9-12 years	1	3%	4	14%
13-16 years	2	5%	--	0%
> 16 years	--	0%	--	0%

Table 21

Percentages of Superintendents by Years of Classroom Experience

Years of Classroom Experience	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
< 1 year	--	0%	--	0%	--	0%
1 to 4 years	14	21%	--	0%	14	21%
5 to 8 years	8	12%	8	12%	16	24%
9 to 12 years	11	17%	7	11%	18	27%
13 to 16 years	1	2%	6	9%	7	11%
16 to 20 years	3	5%	4	6%	7	11%
> 20 years	--	0%	4	6%	4	6%

To identify whether females spend more time in the classroom, the researcher sought information of post classroom experience. The data in Table 22 revealed that 38% of male respondents were in the classroom from 1 to 4 years while females reported a minimum of 5 years in the classroom. No males (0%) indicated 20 years or more of classroom experience as compared to 14% of females who reported 20 years or more in the classroom. The average length of years of classroom teaching was 7.55 years for males and 12.90 years for females.

Table 22

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents by Years of Classroom Experience

Years of Classroom Experience	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
< 1 year	--	0%	--	0%
1 to 4 years	14	38%	--	0%
5 to 8 years	8	22%	8	28%
9 to 12 years	11	30%	7	24%
13 to 16 years	1	3%	6	21%
16 to 20 years	3	8%	4	14%
> 20 years	--	0%	4	14%

The superintendency requires a work week beyond the average 40 hour week of many professions. The data in Table 23 indicated that 89% of the respondents reported a work week of 50 hours or more. One female county superintendent reported a work week of 8 hours.

Table 23

Percentages of Superintendents by Work Hours/Week

Average Numbers of Hours/Work Week	Males		Females		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
< 40 hours	--	0%	1	2%	1	2%
40 to 44 hours	--	0%	3	5%	3	5%
45 to 49 hours	2	3%	1	2%	3	5%
50 to 54 hours	10	15%	6	9%	16	24%
55 to 59 hours	8	12%	4	6%	12	18%
60 to 64 hours	11	17%	7	11%	18	27%
65 to 69 hours	5	8%	6	9%	11	17%
> than 69 hours	1	2%	1	2%	2	3%

Likewise, little difference existed between male and female superintendents regarding the average superintendent's work week. The data in Table 24 showed that the job of the respondents demanded long hours. The average work week for females was 54.24 hours. If the data included only full-time positions, the females' average work week was 55.89 hours. Male respondents reported a similar average work week of 56.54 hours.

Table 24

Percentages of Male and Female Superintendents by Work Hours/Week

Average Numbers of Hours/Work Week	Males		Females	
	n	Percent	n	Percent
< 40 hours	--	0%	1	3%
40 to 44 hours	--	0%	3	10%
45 to 49 hours	2	5%	1	3%
50 to 54 hours	10	27%	6	21%
55 to 59 hours	8	22%	4	14%
60 to 64 hours	11	30%	7	24%
65 to 69 hours	5	14%	6	21%
> than 69 hours	1	3%	1	3%

### Leadership Roles

A major purpose of the study was to describe the leadership roles of the superintendency. Respondents described up to 10 roles they performed as a superintendent. The 66 respondents provided a total of 535 descriptions of their leadership roles. The researcher coded the roles into the following categories: manager, instructional leader, or transformational leader. For example, "sit on board negotiations team" was coded as managerial; "coordinate academic events/competitions" was coded as instructional



leadership; and, "vision/planning: deciding what activities will most accomplish the vision of the district" was coded as transformational leadership. During a discussion with the superintendent in the pilot study, he suggested that "public relations" and "reviewing professional literature" are common to all roles. Thus, the researcher developed a fourth category, common ground, to include "public relations" and "reviewing professional literature" responses.

The data in Table 25 showed the frequency of responses in rank order as they were coded into categories. The category manager had 347 descriptions, 64.9% of the total responses. Respondents most frequently reported managerial roles of budget/finance ( $f = 53$ ), personnel ( $f = 39$ ), paperwork ( $f = 35$ ), board relationships ( $f = 31$ ), and goal setting and planning ( $f = 30$ ). The instructional leadership category resulted in 56 descriptions, 10.5% of the total responses. In this category, respondents most frequently reported instructional leadership of curriculum leadership/development ( $f = 14$ ), teacher/leader/educator ( $f = 12$ ), and staff development, school visibility, and instructional programming ( $f = 9$ , respectively). The transformational leadership category had 92 descriptions, 17.2% of the total responses. Respondents most frequently mentioned developing a common purpose and share decision making ( $f = 11$ ) followed

Table 25

Frequency of Leadership Role Responses

Roles	Total	Frequency		Percentage
		Units	Subunits	
Manager	347			64.9%
Budget/finance		53		
Personnel:		39		
Personnel director			3	
Supervise administrators			8	
Hiring/firing			9	
Recruit, select, and evaluate			19	
Paperwork:		35		
State and federal reports			10	
Reports and statistics			5	
Census preparation			2	
Teacher certification			4	
Interpreting reports for public			3	
Processing paperwork			4	
Questionnaires, surveys			2	
Writing grants			3	
Preparing calendars, schedules			2	
Board relationships		31		
Goal setting and planning		30		
Policy development		17		
Legal assistance		15		
Labor/negotiations		14		
Facility needs		13		
Responding to complaints		11		
Legislative involvement		10		
Attending meetings		8		
Relationships with staff		8		
Purchasing		7		
Community involvement		7		
Transportation needs		7		
Liaison with state dept./county		6		
Maintenance		5		
Meetings with admin. staff		5		
Supervision of support staff		5		
Supervise school events		5		
Deal with special education		4		
Professional involvement		3		
Discipline of students		3		
Organizing for dissolution		2		
Hot lunch programming		2		
Hearings		2		

Table 25 (Continued)

Roles	Total	Frequency		Percentage
		Units	Subunits	
Instructional leader	56			10.5%
Curriculum leadership.dev.		14		
Teacher/leader/educator		12		
Staff development		9		
School visibility		9		
Instructional programming		9		
Coordinating student events		3		
Transformational leader	92			17.2%
Developing common purpose		11		
Shared decision making		11		
Strategic planning		10		
Communications of vision		10		
Interpersonal support/autonomy		7		
Visionary, setting climate		7		
Consensus building		6		
Cheerleader for school/education		6		
Group facilitation		6		
Futurist, new ideas/research		5		
Motivating others		4		
Inspire, tell school story		4		
Delegate responsibility		3		
Role model, teach morals		2		
Common ground	40			7.5%
Public relations		37		
Reading professional literature		3		

closely by strategic planning and communications of vision (f = 10, respectively) as transformational leadership roles. The common ground category had 40 descriptions representing 7.5% of the total response. Respondents most frequently mentioned public relations, f = 37, in their descriptions.

The researcher selected a chi-square test for "goodness of fit" to test whether or not the observed frequencies of leadership roles are a "good" fit to the expected frequencies with the following hypothesis, stated in the null form and evaluated at the .05 level of significance:

Hypothesis I

There is an equal performance of managerial, instructional leadership, and transformational leadership roles by superintendents.

The researcher conducted the chi-square test for "goodness of fit" on the 495 responses coded in the manager, instructional leader, and transformational leader categories. According to the analysis of the data (see Table 26),  $\chi^2(2, N = 495) = 305.06$ ,  $*p < .05$  was significant. Furthermore, the same test was significant at the .01 level. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. An inspection of the data revealed that the manager category was three times larger than the expected frequency. The instructional leader and transformational leader categories were significantly less than the expected frequencies. This finding would suggest that management roles have a greater influence on superintendent performance than what one would expect.

Table 26

Differences between Managerial, Instructional Leadership,  
and Transformational Leadership Roles

	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency
Manager	347	165
Instructional leader	56	165
Transformational leader	92	165

$$\chi^2(2, N = 495) = 305.06, *p < .05.$$

### Importance of Leadership Roles

To identify roles which were considered to be most important to the position as superintendent, the survey questions asked respondents to describe five roles in rank order from 1 (high) to 5 (low), provide a brief description as to why they were important, and identify an approximate percentage of time the role was performed. Respondents provided varying degrees of description as to why they ranked the roles important to their position. A second rank order question obtained data to identify the five preferred roles of respondents. A third question provided data descriptions of what prevented the respondent from performing the preferred roles. The researcher then analyzed the data for gender differences. For the purpose of

reporting, the analysis included frequency counts indicating how many respondents ranked the role from 1 to 5.

The data in Table 27 illustrates the importance of roles to the job as superintendent as ranked by females. Frequency counts of 6 and 4 indicated that female respondents believed that public relations and budget/finance were most important to the position. Likewise, females reported these two categories most frequently in total times mentioned, budget/finance,  $f = 16$ , and public relations,  $f = 14$ . Other roles cited often by frequency count include: goal setting/planning,  $f = 8$ ; board relationships,  $f = 7$ ; strategic planning,  $f = 6$ ; interpersonal support/autonomy,  $f = 4$ ; and, visionary/setting the climate,  $f = 4$ .

When male respondents ranked the importance of roles to their position, they identified budget/finance and board relationships as most important with a frequency of 7 and 6 respectively. In regard to total times mentioned, the data in Table 28 revealed that males identified budget/finance most often followed by board relationships and public relations with frequency counts of 21, 13, and 12 respectively. In addition, males often cited roles classified as personnel management,  $f = 13$ . Males did not mention transformational leadership roles as often as

Table 27

Frequency of Importance of Leadership Role to the Job  
Reported by Females

Roles	Frequency	Number of Respondents Rating Role				
		High 1	2	3	4	Low 5
Manager						
Budget/finance	16	4	5	4	1	2
Personnel:						
Personnel director	2		1	1		
Supervise administrators	--					
Hiring/firing	1			1		
Recruit, select, and evaluate	1		1			
Paperwork:						
State and federal reports	3	1	1	1		
Reports and statistics	1					1
Census preparation	--					
Teacher certification	1			1		
Interpreting reports for public	1				1	
Processing paperwork	2					2
Questionnaires, surveys	--					
Writing grants	1					1
Preparing calendars, schedules	--					
Board relationships	7		2	1	4	
Goal setting and planning	8			4	1	3
Policy development	2			2		
Legal assistance	1				1	
Labor/negotiations	--					
Facility needs	--					
Responding to complaints	1		1			
Legislative involvement	1					1
Attending meetings	1			1		
Relationships with staff	2					2
Purchasing	--					
Community involvement	2					2
Transportation needs	1					1
Liaison with state dept./county	1			1		
Maintenance	1				1	
Meetings with admin. staff	--					
Supervision of support staff	--					
Supervise school events	--					
Deal with special education	2					
Professional involvement	--					
Discipline of students	1				1	

Table 27 (Continued)

Roles	Frequency	Number of Respondents Rating Role				
		High 1	2	3	4	Low 5
Manager (cont.)						
Organizing for dissolution	1	1				
Hot lunch programming	--					
Hearings	--					
Instructional leader						
Curriculum leadership/dev.	3				3	
Teacher/leader/educator	--					
Staff development	--					
School visibility	1				1	
Instructional programming	1			1		
Coordinating student events	--					
Transformational leader						
Developing common purpose	1	1				
Shared decision making	--					
Strategic planning	6	1	1	1		3
Communications of vision	1		1			
Interpersonal support/autonomy	4	1		1	1	1
Visionary, setting climate	4	1	2		1	
Consensus building	1				1	
Cheerleader for school/education	2	1	1			
Group facilitation	1				1	
Futurist, new ideas/research	1	1				
Motivating others	1					1
Inspire, tell school story	--					
Delegate responsibility	1					1
Role model, teach morals	2	1		1		
Common ground						
Public relations	14	6	1	3	3	1
Reading professional literature	--					



Table 28

Frequency of Importance of Leadership Roles to the Job  
Reported by Males

Roles	Frequency	Number of Respondents Rating Role				
		High 1	2	3	4	Low 5
Manager						
Budget/finance	21	7	6	5	1	2
Personnel:						
Personnel director	9	1		2	4	2
Supervise administrators	1		1			
Hiring/firing	3	1			1	1
Recruit, select, and evaluate	--					
Paperwork:						
State and federal reports	--					
Reports and statistics	1			1		
Census preparation	--					
Teacher certification	--					
Interpreting reports for public	1			1		
Processing paperwork	1			1		
Questionnaires, surveys	--					
Writing grants	--					
Preparing calendars, schedules	--					
Board relationships	13	6	2	1	3	1
Goal setting and planning	9	3	2	1	3	
Policy development	3			1		2
Legal assistance	6			3	2	1
Labor/negotiations	5		1	1	2	1
Facility needs	4				2	2
Responding to complaints	--					
Legislative involvement	3			1	1	1
Attending meetings	4		1	1		1
Relationships with staff	3		1		2	
Purchasing	--					
Community involvement	3					3
Transportation needs	--					
Liaison with state dept./county	--					
Maintenance	--					
Meetings with admin. staff	1				1	
Supervision of support staff	1			1		
Supervise school events	1			1		
Deal with special education	--					
Professional involvement	--					
Discipline of students	2	1			1	

Table 28 (Continued)

Roles	Frequency	Number of Respondents Rating Role				
		High 1	2	3	4	Low 5
Manager (cont.)						
Organizing for dissolution	--					
Hot lunch programming	--					
Hearings	--					
Instructional leader						
Curriculum leadership/dev.	--					
Teacher/leader/educator	3		1		1	1
Staff development	2		1	1		
School visibility	2		1			1
Instructional programming	1			1		
Coordinating student events	--					
Transformational leader						
Developing common purpose	4	2		1	1	
Shared decision making	1	1				
Strategic planning	6	1	1		3	1
Communications of vision	3		3			
Interpersonal support/autonomy	2		1			1
Visionary, setting climate	2	1				1
Consensus building	2	1	1			
Cheerleader for school/education	2		2			
Group facilitation	5	1	1	2		1
Futurist, new ideas/research	4		1	2		1
Motivating others	2			2		
Inspire, tell school story	--					
Delegate responsibility	1					1
Role model, teach morals	2		1		1	
Common ground						
Public relations	12	3	2	3	2	2
Reading professional literature	1				1	

females. When they did, 6 males cited strategic planning as most important to the job.

Almost equally, male and female respondents mentioned goal setting and planning ( $f = 9$ ,  $f = 8$ , respectively) and strategic planning ( $f = 6$ ,  $f = 6$ , respectively). It may be argued that goal setting and planning, a managerial role, and strategic planning, a transformational role, are synonymous. However, in their descriptions of strategic planning, respondents clearly defined the elements of strategic planning: vision, central mission, site planning, and setting "a goal that is worthy of commitment" (Hamel & Prahalad, 1989).

Although both males and females identified budget/finance as one of the two most important roles to their position, there was a difference in the amount of time spent performing the role. Females reported that they spent approximately 10% of their time in budget/finance roles. Males, however, described that they spent 25% to 50% of their time with budget/finance. Both males and females reported that budget/finance was a necessity of the job.

In comparison, females reported that they spent approximately 50% of their time performing roles that were categorized as transformational. Examples included "cheerleader/negotiator: keeping personnel on task by

demonstrating support and applauding achievements" and "visionary: providing focus and direction to the organization." Males, on the other hand, reported that transformational roles were important to perform approximately 29% of the time. Examples cited were "facilitator: moving the organization in thoughtful ways" and "unifier: creating common goals."

The data suggest that job descriptions, board and community expectations, and the nature of the position necessitated the performance of certain roles which may or may not have been preferred leadership roles. To determine the preferred leadership roles of the respondents, the researcher collected data regarding leadership role preference by asking the respondents to identify and rank the top five role preferences with 1 being the most important. The data in Table 29 indicated the frequency of preferred leadership roles reported by females. Most frequently, females ranked public relations as the most important role preference,  $f = 5$ , followed closely by teacher/leader/educator,  $f = 4$ . Moreover, an analysis of the most frequent role preference, as indicated by the total times mentioned, showed that female respondents cited public relations,  $f = 13$ . Budget/finance was the second most frequently mentioned role preference,  $f = 10$ . Females also frequently mentioned leadership role preferences indicative

Table 29

Frequency of Preferred Leadership Roles Reported by Females

Roles	Frequency	Number of Respondents Rating Role				
		High 1	2	3	4	Low 5
Manager						
Budget/finance	10	1	2	2	3	2
Personnel:						
Personnel director	2		2			
Supervise administrators	1			1		
Hiring/firing	3		1	1		
Recruit, select, and evaluate	--					
Paperwork:						
State and federal reports	1	1				
Reports and statistics	1			1		
Census preparation	--					
Teacher certification	--					
Interpreting reports for public	--					
Processing paperwork	--					
Questionnaires, surveys	--					
Writing grants	1					1
Preparing calendars, schedules	--					
Board relationships	8		2		3	3
Goal setting and planning	6	2		2	1	1
Policy development	2		1			1
Legal assistance	--					
Labor/negotiations	--					
Facility needs	--					
Responding to complaints	--					
Legislative involvement	2		1			1
Attending meetings	2	1		1		
Relationships with staff	--					
Purchasing	--					
Community involvement	2				1	1
Transportation needs	--					
Liaison with state dept./county	--					
Maintenance	--					
Meetings with admin. staff	1			1		
Supervision of support staff	--					
Supervise school events	--					
Deal with special education	--					
Professional involvement	1				1	
Discipline of students	1				1	

Table 29 (Continued)

Roles	Frequency	Number of Respondents Rating Role				
		High 1	2	3	4	Low 5
Manager (cont.)						
Organizing for dissolution	--					
Hot lunch programming	--					
Hearings	--					
Instructional leader						
Curriculum leadership/dev.	4	1	1		2	
Teacher/leader/educator	7	4			3	
Staff development	1		1			
School visibility	2	1			1	
Instructional programming	1	1				
Coordinating student events	1		1			
Transformational leader						
Developing common purpose	2				1	1
Shared decision making	--					
Strategic planning	8	1	3	1	3	
Communications of vision	1					1
Interpersonal support/autonomy	2		1		1	
Visionary, setting climate	4	1	1		2	
Consensus building	1		1			
Cheerleader for school/education	6	2	2	2		
Group facilitation	2	1				1
Futurist, new ideas/research	1		1			
Motivating others	1					1
Inspire, tell school story	--					
Delegate responsibility	1					1
Role model, teach morals	2			1		1
Common ground						
Public relations	13	5	2	4	1	1
Reading professional literature	--					

of varying leadership styles: board relationships,  $f = 8$ ; strategic planning,  $f = 8$ ; teacher/leader/educator,  $f = 7$ ; cheerleader for school/education,  $f = 6$ , and goal setting and planning,  $f = 6$ .

The data in Table 30 revealed male respondents' preference for leadership roles. Males ranked budget/finance and public relations as their preference with frequency counts of 5 each. Four respondents ranked board relationships and strategic planning as most important. When role preferences are analyzed by looking at the total times mentioned, the most frequent mentioned categories are mostly managerial: budget/finance,  $f = 19$ ; personnel management,  $f = 18$ ; board relationships,  $f = 16$ ; public relations,  $f = 14$ ; and, goal setting and planning,  $f = 11$ .

When asked what prevents the superintendent from performing their preferred roles, respondents cited time as the most frequent barrier. Male and female respondents also reported that expectations of the board and community to perform more business-like roles were interfering with leadership. Examples of respondents' descriptions included paperwork, handling complaints, board interference in management tasks, and meetings. Six superintendents reported that "nothing" prevented them from performing their role preference. Four of these six superintendents earlier described managerial roles as important to the job and role preference. The other two respondents described both roles,

Table 30

Frequency of Preferred Leadership Roles Reported by Males

Roles	Frequency	Number of Respondents Rating Role				
		High 1	2	3	4	Low 5
Manager						
Budget/finance	19	5	4	5	4	1
Personnel:						
Personnel director	11		2	4		5
Supervise administrators	2			1	1	
Hiring/firing	3	1		1	1	
Recruit, select, and evaluate	2				1	1
Paperwork:						
State and federal reports	--					
Reports and statistics	--					
Census preparation	--					
Teacher certification	--					
Interpreting reports for public	--					
Processing paperwork	--					
Questionnaires, surveys	--					
Writing grants	--					
Preparing calendars, schedules	--					
Board relationships	16	4	4	2	2	4
Goal setting and planning	11		3	2	4	2
Policy development	5			1	4	
Legal assistance	6		1	2	1	2
Labor/negotiations	2				1	2
Facility needs	3		1		1	1
Responding to complaints	--					
Legislative involvement	5			2	2	1
Attending meetings	2					2
Relationships with staff	2		1	1		
Purchasing	1			1		
Community involvement	2		1		1	
Transportation needs	--					
Liaison with state dept./county	--					
Maintenance	--					
Meetings with admin. staff	1		1			
Supervision of support staff	--					
Supervise school events	1					1
Deal with special education	--					
Professional involvement	1					
Discipline of students	1			1		



Table 30 (Continued)

Roles	Frequency	Number of Respondents Rating Role				
		High 1	2	3	4	Low 5
Manager (cont.)						
Organizing for dissolution	--					
Hot lunch programming	--					
Hearings	--					
Instructional leader						
Curriculum leadership/dev.	2	1			1	
Teacher/leader/educator	5		2	1	1	1
Staff development	3	1	2			
School visibility	5	3	1			1
Instructional programming	2			2		
Coordinating student events	--					
Transformational leader						
Developing common purpose	1			1		
Shared decision making	1	1				
Strategic planning	8	4	1	1	1	1
Communications of vision	3		3			
Interpersonal support/autonomy	3	2				1
Visionary, setting climate	2	2				
Consensus building	2	1			1	
Cheerleader for school/education	--					
Group facilitation	2		1		1	
Futurist, new ideas/research	2	1				1
Motivating others	2	1				1
Inspire, tell school story	--					
Delegate responsibility	1			1		
Role model, teach morals	1		1			
Common ground						
Public relations	14	5	2	2	2	3
Reading professional literature	1				1	

importance to the job and role preference, as transformational. One female also commented, "nothing, we find time if we value the job."

### **Perceptions of What Constitutes an Effective Superintendent**

To obtain data regarding perceptions of an effective superintendent, the researcher asked the respondents to describe an effective superintendent. The data in Table 31 showed their responses and what prevented them from being effective. Six females described an effective superintendent as an instructional leader. Thirteen females described an effective superintendent as a transformational leader, while one respondent described an effective superintendent good at public relations. There were no descriptions of an effective superintendent described as a manager by female respondents. Female respondents identified time most often as a barrier to being an instructional leader. In addition to time, female respondents identified lack of shared vision, resistance to change, and community expectations as barriers to effectiveness as a transformational leader.

When asked to describe the effective superintendent, 10 male respondents described managerial roles in their portrait. Three male respondents described the effective superintendent as an instructional leader. One male

Table 31

Description of an Effective Superintendent Reported by Females

	Description of Effective Superintendent	What Prevents Effectiveness
Instructional leader	Instructional leader	Time
	Being there when and where needed to provide support and direction for personnel as they attempt to provide instruction to meet student needs.	Nothing. I am available. I postpone all but emergencies to make it possible.
	Instructional leader representative of the school system in the community, frequent visitor in schools.	Lack of time and money
	Parent, counselor, friend, educational leader, and tough skin.	Too much time required for management duties
	Understanding and dedicated, listens to patrons and work for interest of students, knows changing laws, helps teachers do a better job.	Time and budget
	Being visible on campus, approachable to staff, parents, etc.	Paperwork, no assistant
Transformational leader	Bring community together to support education, allows site planning, provides leadership for change.	Time, political reality, too many meetings, lack of money

Table 31 (Continued)

	Description of Effective Superintendent	What Prevents Effectiveness
Transformational leader (cont.)	Delegate responsibility while providing leadership in community for success, visionary, respect, knowledgeable, and know how to access information.	Cooperation from school employees, board members, and community
	Educational leader, futurist, politician.	Nothing
	Formulates vision, sharpens the vision, secures resources to support the vision, and mobilizes staff to carry it out.	To some degree, emergencies (large and small) can interfere
	Leadership, concern for people, promote district, vision, and make policy based upon research for goal accomplishment.	Community expectations
	Motivated person who understands the people, been involved at grassroots level, intelligent, knowledgeable, pitches in.	Constant interruptions, budget, constraints
	Need to affect change without creating hard feelings.	Small size of district--too many roles, district is fragmented socially no real community
	Visionary, effective at communications. He/she knows where they want district to go and develops plans.	Resistance to change
	Repertoire of skills, tough manager or use people skills depending on situation, communication skills.	Knowing and understanding situations

Table 31 (Continued)

	Description of Effective Superintendent	What Prevents Effectiveness
Transformational leader (cont.)	Vision, operates within the vision, sense of direction, find ways to attain goals, relationships, respect, climate, environment for learning and growing.	I think I do it
	Vision whose performance is directed on creating quality schools.	Sharing of the vision by board, staff, and patrons
	Visionary, finds ways of getting others to commit to a plan. Delegates (knows when), constant recognition of accomplishments and assessment when things go wrong.	Resistance to change and self-made experts living in the 50s
	Information gatherer, teacher, long-range planner, conflict mediator.	Paperwork, interruptions, community and learning need to be unified
Common ground	Public relations and rule enforcement.	Lack of discipline from parents

respondent replied he did not know what an effective superintendent was, but indicated that time was a barrier. The remaining 17 responses by males suggested that an effective superintendent would be a transformational leader. The male respondents' descriptions identified reoccurring themes of time, paperwork, and philosophical differences between the board and community as barriers to achieving effectiveness as a superintendent. However, male respondents who described the effective superintendent as a manager more often stated that nothing interfered with their effectiveness.

Table 32

Description of an Effective Superintendent Reported by Males

	Description of Effective Superintendent	What Prevents Effectiveness
Manager	Budgeting, supervision, board work, purchasing, evaluation of programs, consensus, defining goals, interpreting programs to public.	Nothing
	Do it right, give the best.	Unplanned unforeseen crises
	Effective at allocating resources, good handle on finances, personnel, and resources. All else is delegated.	Lack of competent staff
	Effective, dependable policies and integrating them with available resources.	Time, keeping track of all functions, legal requirements, reports
	Good supervision, knowledgeable and actively manages personnel, students, financial affairs, curriculum, buildings, etc.	Nothing. I'm successful
	Hiring competent staff.	Nothing, but money
	Passage of levies, negotiations, and community relations.	Try to let nothing come ahead
	Someone who can effectively manage the district, people, money, students.	Nothing
	Works well with administrators and other people to achieve goals of district.	Nothing

Table 32 (Continued)

	Description of Effective Superintendent	What Prevents Effectiveness
Manager (cont.)	Good management of money, resources, personnel.	Listening to patrons, support help, and special projects
Instructional leader	Dedicated individual with people skills and competence, believes that student growth and achievement is most important.	Busy work, paperwork of state and feds., time, meetings
	Instructional leader who utilizes resources, finances, material/human resources to improve teaching and learning.	Organizational structure and change resistance
	One who has the ability to gather, use resources to promote quality education for students, able to steer controversy positively.	Fiscal and time constraints, personnel issues interfere
Transformational leader	Ability to feel others pain/concerns/joy/successes, putting student/district needs first, role model, and leader.	Time, own shortcomings, get caught up with events
	Communication with board/staff for a plan for district improvement and operation consistent with mission and belief.	Inability to establish/achieve, individual goals. Communication is integral.
	Effective communicator.	Nothing
	Ethical, risk, delegate, encourage creativity, vision.	Daily activities blur vision
	Fair, impartial, moral, ethical, legal	Community expectations are different



Table 32 (Continued)

	Description of Effective Superintendent	What Prevents Effectiveness
Transformational leader (cont.)	One who creates balance in his/her life.	Spending too much time on professional aspects of life
	Partnering with all constituencies.	Time limits
	People person and facilitator, leadership when others are key to carrying out ideas, support, vision, people skills.	Philosophical diversity, need to be more directive than what I like
	Shares decision making, good public relations.	Nothing: staff helps, but I have ultimate say
	Team builder and public relations.	Lack of support
	Team player and empowers others to accomplish task and to reach full extent of their ability.	--
	Visible, communication, problem solver, pulls others together to accomplish goals, identifies needs.	Lack of time
	Vision, delegates, resourceful, people skills.	Emphasis on management tasks
	Visionary, consensus builder to facilitate change and improvements.	Tradition, lack of finances
	Communication--communicating effectively with staff and publics.	Time for complete and proper communications

Table 32 (Continued)

	Description of Effective Superintendent	What Prevents Effectiveness
Transformational leader (cont.)	Listener, delegator, benevolent dictator.	Board pounds on superintendent from negative people hounding board
	Educational leader seeing big picture, see that everything leads to more and better opportunity for students.	Time
Common ground	People person and public relations.	Legal requirements
Other	Don't know.	Time

### Professional Development Needs

The final data collected was the respondents' perceptions of needs for professional development in the superintendency. The data in Table 33 showed the topic of need for professional development and total times mentioned. In addition, examples of the reasons why this topic was important are presented as not all respondents gave a reason for its importance. Other than budget/finance, cited 9 times, and legal/law issues, cited 7 times, the identified

Table 33

Perceptions of Need for Superintendent Professional Development

Professional Development Topic	Frequency	Examples of Reasons for Importance
Strategic planning	14	Need to bring others with you Using needs assessments for long-range planning Develop ways to achieve goals and handle change
Autonomy/Interpersonal relationships	12	Understanding self to have realistic perception of job expectations/demands Need to be effective in all areas with people Develop caring individuals, teach flexibility
Budget/finance	9	Important for maintenance of schools Solvency Establish goals within possibilities of budget
Communication	8	When information is passed upon immediately, people understand and know issues To keep district moving and honest Building support and understanding change
Consensus building	8	Need to know how to work with people Create community Improvement cannot occur without consensus
Conflict resolution	7	Understand change: how to do it, need to know whether to maintain the way things are Reduce time on putting out fires Need to know how to solve and resolve quickly

Table 33 (Continued)

Professional Development Topic	Frequency	Examples of Reasons for Importance
Legal/law issues	7	Keep superintendent and district out of court Know how to access legal information quickly Too many lawsuits
Delegation skills	5	Job is too big, use team approach, empower, and trust
Risk taking, futuristic thinking	5	Keep abreast of new and innovative programs Understand change Keeps improvement/enhancement of programs
Public relations	5	Reduce time spent on brush fires Lots of it Keep school in public eye positively
Research	3	Need to know what's working Interpret trends for public
Networking	3	Need opportunity to become knowledgeable about other areas of the job Support for changing roles
Technology	2	This is the future Need to know how to access information quickly
Personnel management	2	Get along with people
Problem solving	2	It's what we do Handle crises successfully
Instructional improvement	1	
Staff development	1	
Facilitator training	1	
Role modeling	1	
Policy development	1	

need for professional development was of a transformational nature. The following examples and response rate identified transformational leadership development as most important for professional development: strategic planning, 14; autonomy/interpersonal relationships, 12; communication, 8; consensus building, 8; conflict resolution, 7; delegation skills, 5; and, risk taking/futuristic thinkings, 5. The reasons for their importance focused on having a vision, developing strategic plans with which achieve the vision, and understanding about how to create a risk-free environment which supports communication and interpersonal relationships.

The researcher requested a job description if available. The response rate to this request, however, was not significant enough to warrant analysis.

### Summary

Data analyses were presented in five sections: Demographic Data of Respondents, Leadership Roles, Importance of Leadership Roles, Perceptions of What Constitutes an Effective Superintendent, and Professional Developmental Needs. The analyses were descriptive in nature using descriptive statistical procedures to gain meaningful insights into respondents' perceptions of the performance of

superintendent leadership roles and the differences that exist between male and female superintendents.

The respondents' descriptions of roles performed consistently reflected that budget/finance was important to the job as well as a preferred role. In determining the importance of roles to the job as well as preferred roles, differences between male and female superintendents were found with females reporting a broader array of leadership roles than men. Topics related to transformational leadership were also identified as a need for professional development.

Chapter 5  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION,  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate how K-12 superintendents view their roles as educational leaders. The congruence of transformational leadership theory and identified role performance was analyzed in an effort to understand the roles most important to the women and men who are currently superintendents. A secondary purpose was to find whether, and to what extent, women superintendents practice leadership roles differently than men. This study posed the following research questions:

1. What do superintendents describe as the leadership roles they perform?
2. Which leadership roles do superintendents consider most important to the successful performance of their job?
3. How do the perceptions of leadership roles differ between male and female practicing superintendents?

### Procedures

The population consisted of the 1994-1995 membership of the American Association of School Administrators. Stratified random sampling procedures identified 101 females and 99 males to participate in the study. The instrument, a researcher developed survey, was mailed and yielded 93 responses (46%) of which 66 (33%), including follow-up, had usable data.

To answer the research questions, a chi-square analysis described the significance of observed and expected frequencies of reported roles for research question 1. To answer research questions 2 and 3, the researcher collected data from the respondents which were coded and analyzed using frequency counts to describe emerging patterns.

### Findings

The study yielded findings that have important implications for those interested in the superintendency and the leadership roles performed by superintendents. Sixty-six practicing K-12 superintendents from 22 states participated in this study. Of the 66 participants, 37 were male and 29 were female. Major findings of the study are presented below.



### Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The characteristics of the group of respondents provided a variety of perspectives into the superintendency across the nation. A review of the demographics revealed the following characteristics of the respondents:

1. County superintendents were more likely to be represented in the states of Nebraska, Montana, and North Dakota. County superintendents were those superintendents who occupied an elected position or connected with county government for the purpose of overseeing school managerial tasks.
2. Sixty-six percent (66%) of female respondents were superintendents in districts of 1,000 or greater as compared to 52% of males.
3. Twenty-one percent (21%) of female superintendents had 25 or more schools in the district as compared to 8% of males.
4. Respondents from rural schools represented 80% of the total respondents.
5. The average age for male and female respondents in the study was approximately the same: 52 for males and 53 for females.
6. The greatest percentage, 89%, of respondents had a post-masters' degree: 41% of females reported a Ph.D. or Ed.D. as compared to 32% of males.

7. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the respondents reported having no military experience. The remaining 21%, all male, had an average length of service of 8 years.

8. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the respondents reported serving in the current district 1 to 4 years. However, the average length of service as a superintendent in any district was 4.66 years for females and 6.66 years for males. More males, 62%, served in other districts than females, 10%. The average length of service in other districts was 4.33 years for females and 7.74 years for males.

9. A greater percentage of females, 34%, were assistant superintendents compared to 25% of the males. On the other hand, the average length of service as an assistant superintendent was 4.81 years for females and 5.6 years for males.

10. Males, 76%, served more years as a principal than females, 51%. The average length of the principalship was 7.31 years for males and 6.96 years for females.

11. Females spent more years in some other type of administrative position such as curriculum director, assistant principal, or head teacher. The average length of service in this capacity was 7.12 years for females and 5.97 years for males.

12. Females reported more classroom experience than males. The average length of classroom teaching experience was 12.9 years for females and 7.55 years for males. Fourteen percent (14%) of the females reported classroom experience of 20 years or more compared with no (0%) male respondents reporting the same.

13. Respondents reported they work 50 or more hours/week. The average work week for females was 54.24 hours and 55.89 hours for males.

#### Leadership Roles

The 66 participants in the study provided a total of 535 descriptions of the leadership roles of the superintendency. The following findings are presented from the respondents' written discussions of their leadership roles:

1. Respondents performed 64.9% managerial, 10.5% instructional leadership, and 17.2% transformational leadership roles. Roles considered common ground accounted for 7.5% of the reported descriptions. Despite the current emphasis on transformational leadership in education, managerial roles have had a greater influence on superintendent performance than expected.

2. Superintendents most frequently described the performance of management roles related to budget/finance, personnel, paperwork, board relationships, and goal setting

and planning in their position. The superintendents described instructional leadership and transformational leadership roles less frequently. However, when delineated, descriptions of instructional leadership most frequently included curriculum leadership/development, teacher/leader/educator, staff development, school visibility, and instructional programming; and, transformational leadership included developing a common purpose, shared decision making, strategic planning, and communication of vision. Superintendents also frequently cited public relations in role performance.

#### Importance of Leadership Roles

The following findings show which roles were most important to the position held by the respondents and preferred by the respondents:

1. Male and female superintendents perceived that transformational leadership roles were important to the position. Transformational leadership roles represented 23% of the total response by both males and females. However, males more frequently mentioned that managerial roles were important to the position with a response rate of 62%. In comparison, managerial roles accounted for 57% of the total response by females.

Female superintendents most frequently identified budget and finance, a managerial role, and public relations,

common ground, as most important to their position. These two roles accounted for 15% and 13% of the total response respectively. Females frequently cited other roles indicative of transformational leadership as important to their position: goal setting/planning, board relationships, strategic planning, interpersonal support/autonomy, and visionary/setting the climate.

Males, on the other hand, most frequently identified the managerial roles of budget/finance and board relationships as important to the position. These two roles accounted for 14% and 9% of the total response respectively. Male superintendents also frequently described other managerial roles of personnel director and goal setting and planning as important to the position.

In regard to time spent on performing the roles, females reported spending only 10% of their time on budget/finance while males reported up to 50% of their time in this capacity.

2. When indicating preference of leadership roles, females included a broad array of managerial, instructional leadership, and transformational leadership roles. They cited public relations, budget/finance, board relationships, strategic planning, teacher/leader/educator, cheerleader for school/education, and goal setting/planning as preferred roles. Males, on the other hand described mostly managerial

roles as their preference: budget/finance, personnel management, and goal setting/planning. Again, males less frequently identified a preference for instructional or transformational leadership roles. When they did, males most often identified public relations and strategic planning as role preference.

3. Both male and female respondents identified time, meetings, day-to-day management tasks of paperwork, handling complaints, and board interference as barriers to effectively performing superintendent roles.

#### Perceptions of an Effective Superintendent

The following findings illustrate what respondents believe an effective superintendent does and what prevents him/her from being effective:

1. Both male and female respondents most frequently described an effective superintendent as a transformational leader. When not describing a transformational leader, males described an effective superintendent as a manager, whereas no females described a manager as an effective leader.

2. Male and female respondents identified time, paperwork, and philosophical differences between the board and community as barriers to being an effective superintendent. Males, who described the effective superintendent as a manager reported that "nothing" prevents

them from being effective. On the other hand, females and males, who described the effective superintendent as transformational, cited that resistance to change, lack of shared vision, cooperation, and day-to-day emergencies were barriers to effective performance.

#### Professional Development Needs

The respondents provided their perceptions of need for professional development in the superintendency in enhancing superintendent leadership roles. The superintendents identified the following professional development needs most often: strategic planning, autonomy/interpersonal relationships, communication, consensus building, conflict resolution, delegation, and risk taking/futuristic thinking. These needs indicated that enhancing skills as a transformational leader were important to the respondents. Likewise, respondents frequently reported that budget/finance and legal/law issues, two managerial roles, were important topics for professional development.

#### **Conclusions**

The purposes of the study were to analyze leadership roles as reported by practicing K-12 public school superintendents and to determine if women superintendents practice these leadership roles differently than do men. The generalizability of the study is limited by the response

number and location of the respondents. However, the following conclusions are drawn from the data from the 66 respondents representing 22 states:

1. In practice, the roles of the superintendency are mostly managerial dealing with budget/finance and public relations. Superintendents perform instructional leadership and transformational leadership roles less frequently.

2. Female superintendents report a broad array of leadership roles important to the job citing public relations and budget/finance most often. Yet, they report spending only 10% of their time in the managerial role of budget/finance.

3. Male superintendents identify budget/finance, public relations, and board relationships as important to their position. In addition, males identify other managerial roles of personnel director and handling legal/law issues as important to the position. With regard to time spent in these roles, males reported spending up to 50% of their time with budgets and finance.

4. Female superintendents report an almost equal preference for managerial, instructional leadership, and transformational leadership roles. Within this context, females identify public relations most frequently.

5. Male superintendents identify mostly managerial roles in leadership role preference: budget/finance,



personnel management, board relationships, and goal setting and planning.

6. Male and female superintendents report that time was the most frequent barrier to performing preferred roles. In addition, day-to-day management tasks and board and community expectations prevent superintendents from performing preferred roles.

7. Male and female superintendents perceive a transformational leader as an effective superintendent. Males also perceive an effective superintendent as a manager.

8. Male and female superintendents identify time and philosophical differences of the board and community in preventing superintendents from being effective transformational leaders.

9. Superintendents cite transformational leadership issues as a need for professional development most often. However, they also identify budget/finance and legal/law issues, managerial topics, as other professional development needs.

10. County superintendents are responsible for the managerial tasks of the district.

11. Male and female superintendents spend approximately the same amount of hours on the job.

12. Males spend more years as a superintendent in other districts and in the principalship.

13. A greater percentage of females are assistant superintendents before attaining the superintendency.

14. Female superintendents have more years of classroom experience.

15. Military experience is not a contributing factor in the leadership role performance.

### Discussion

The results of this study add to the limited amount of research regarding the leadership roles of the superintendency. Caution in using the results of this study should be exercised since all states were not represented in the study. However, a brief discussion of how the results of this study compare to previous research regarding superintendent leadership roles and implications of the results does inform the subject and point to the future.

There have been few studies delineating the roles of the superintendent. Historically, the roles of the superintendency have been managerial. Only within this past decade has there been an emphasis on rethinking the leadership roles of the superintendent. More importantly, research regarding the leadership change in the superintendency has been slow to emerge. The most

comprehensive studies included research conducted by Collier (1987) and Sclafani (1987) who obtained data from random samples of superintendents in Texas, the nation, and a national sample of effective superintendents identified by expert selection. Collier (1987) and Sclafani (1987) identified "demonstrating a broad array of leadership skills" and "demonstrates sound principles of personnel administration" as the top ranked superintendent leadership performances. Furthermore, Collier and Sclafani identified "effective public relations and coalition building activities," "effective teacher performance evaluation," and "sound financial planning and cash management" as important leadership roles. Although Collier and Sclafani found many similarities in superintendent leadership role performance, they also found a difference. In Collier's research, superintendents included "curriculum design and instructional delivery" as important superintendent leadership roles, while Sclafani found that "motivation techniques" were important to the sample of identified effective superintendents.

Most recently, Hoyle and CSS (1993), commissioned by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), have suggested the need to rethink existing leadership practices to include a greater emphasis on team building, shared leadership collaboration, and instructional

improvement. As a result of Hoyle's and CSS's commission, this study identifies very specific reflections of the changes in leadership roles of the superintendency. Within the ranks of the superintendency, the leadership roles reflective of transformational leadership have been slow to emerge. The data in this study support the lack of transformational leadership roles performed by superintendents as respondents describe their role performance in managerial descriptions. Yet, when asked to describe an "effective superintendent," male and female superintendents most often describe a transformational leader. The data also show that a small percentage of male superintendents, 15%, describe an effective superintendent as a manager, whereas no females describe effectiveness in managerial terms. This presents an interesting question in terms of exploring the discrepancy between the actual roles performed and what superintendents believe they should perform to be effective.

This discrepancy is addressed through the questions relating to the roles perceived as most important to the position. Consistently, both male and female superintendents identify budget/finance and public relations as most important to their position. However, differences exist between males and females as they describe the other roles. Females cite a broader array of leadership roles important

to the position reflective of transformational and managerial roles: goal setting/planning, board relationships, strategic planning, interpersonal support/autonomy, and visionary/setting the climate. Males, on the other hand, most frequently describe managerial roles: board relationships and personnel management. These findings suggest a more precise identification of role performance attributed to gender differences than identified by the Collier (1987) and Sclafani (1987) study. In addition, the superintendents in this study less frequently described instructional leadership roles as important which is inconsistent with the identification of "curriculum design and instructional delivery" of the Collier study. However, the data of this study supports Sclafani's research of effective superintendents who described "motivation techniques" as a transformational leadership role.

The findings of this study suggest that superintendents perform certain roles due to other factors such as board and community expectations or tradition. Superintendents' comments exemplify the concern for managerial roles such as "expectations of the community are that I perform more business-like roles," "board members' concerns make me a micromanager," and "external expectations--what I want and what others expect are different." Furthermore, the difference in the amount of time spent upon the managerial

roles is marked. The data show that females spend 10% of their time performing budgetary roles while males spend up to 50% of their time in budget and finance. This finding is important for future research to identify whether hiring criteria, district characteristics, or leadership style are contributors to the difference in time spent on managerial roles.

Likewise, the demands of job descriptions, time, paperwork, day-to-day management activities or external expectations of the community/board appear to affect the preferred leadership roles performed by superintendents. Although male and female respondents report these similar barriers to the performance of preferred leadership roles, the data again suggest that there is a greater spectrum of preferred leadership roles associated with gender. Females describe a broad array of leadership roles of a managerial, instructional leadership, and transformational nature: public relations, budget/finance, board relationships, strategic planning, teacher/leader/educator, cheerleader for school/education, and goal setting/planning. Males, on the other hand, describe a preference for leadership roles that are managerial: budget/finance, personnel management, board relationships, and goal setting/planning. These findings support previous research in concluding that females prefer

to use a broader array of leadership roles (Eagly et al., 1992; Estler, 1987; Frasher & Schoemaker, 1982).

How the superintendent engages in leadership roles relates to perceptions of effectiveness. In describing an effective superintendent as a transformational leader, consistent characteristics and skills emerge: vision, effective collaboration, good interpersonal relationship, autonomy, futurist, motivator, team building skills, and communication skills. However, superintendents describe that external influences prevent them from being a transformational leader. The superintendents again identify time and board/community expectations as the major barriers in being a transformational leader citing philosophical differences between the superintendent and board, community expectations, and politics. Descriptions such as "resistance to change and self-made experts living in the 50's," "emphasis on management tasks," and "cooperation from school employees, board members, and community" depict a situation that will be difficult to overcome in performing transformational leadership given the political nature of the superintendency where appeasement of the public is valued.

This disparity between what superintendents perceive as effective leadership and board and community expectations accounts for an emphasis on managerial roles as

superintendents attempt to please boards and communities. Moreover, females may meet greater resistance or fail to be hired as superintendents, given the diversity in their leadership role performance, if external expectations fail to acknowledge the need for a broad array of leadership roles beyond management skills. Thus, there is an important implication for boards and communities when considering the recruitment of superintendents. Females may be more attracted to positions where there is (a) a good match between the district needs and the candidate's skills, (b) a visionary, proactive board, (c) an encouragement of risk taking, and (d) a stable financial picture (Sharatt & Derrington, 1993) which this study identifies as most closely matching feminine leadership styles.

The findings of this study support the research of others that feminine leadership styles of vision, team building, and shared leadership (Helgesen, 1990; Shakeshaft, 1987) will be an important component in providing a model for transformational leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992) in the superintendency. Hope for bringing the actual role performance closer to transformational leadership rests in the descriptions of perceived need for professional development in the superintendency. Male and female superintendents recognize the need for more training as a transformational leader by citing strategic planning,



autonomy and interpersonal relationships, communication skills, consensus building, conflict resolution, delegation, risk taking, and networking important for professional development.

As superintendents engage in these identified professional development opportunities, the characteristics and skills that women and men acquire and possess, and the degree to which they consciously or through their actions perform as a superintendent, will affect board and community perceptions of leadership change. This would suggest that the historical dominance of men within public education administration, in particular in the superintendency, has led to a fusion of traditional management assumptions and rules which makes the superintendency in itself somewhat alien to many women (and some men too). As a result, the data of this study suggest that the basic problem of underrepresentation of women in the superintendency has less to do with the barriers and obstacles for women to get managerial jobs than with the prestructuring of management and organization by traditional roles of society.

### Recommendations

This study establishes a framework that can be used to enhance the leadership development of the superintendency. Specific recommendations are provided below:

1. Professional development programs for practicing superintendents should concentrate on training activities that enhance skills of strategic planning, autonomy/interpersonal relationships, budget/finance, communication, consensus building, conflict resolution, and public relations. Skills of technology will help superintendents access information quickly as well as providing a network system for support as roles change. Simulations, internships, and field experiences should stress research and skill development in these areas for superintendent preparation programs.

2. Future research might include board and/or community perceptions of the roles of the superintendency. Insights into eliminating barriers that transformational leaders experience may be gleaned.

3. A broader sample size might be used to obtain perceptions of superintendents in all states if further national studies are conducted.

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Appendix  
SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP SURVEY

April 15, 1995

Dear Colleague:

As a result of recent reports on the condition of public education and school transformation, school leadership has come under increasingly close scrutiny. Several of the reports have identified the superintendent as an important factor. Limited research, however, has been done to identify the characteristics of the changing roles of superintendent performances.

This research effort, in cooperation with the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), is designed to assess perceptions of practicing K-12 superintendents across the nation relating to the elements of leadership roles. Results may be used to design staff development programs for school superintendents and provide information to institutions preparing men and women for the superintendency.

You are invited to participate in this important research study. If you choose to participate, you will be completing an open-ended survey. This survey has been developed to allow you to respond in your own words. You are free to answer the questions in their entirety, partially, or not at all. In addition, I am requesting a job description of your position as superintendent, if available. Risks are considered minimal in this type of research. There are no risks whatsoever to your employment status whether or not you choose to participate. Since your input is important to this research, I hope that you will participate.

Identities and confidentiality of individual responses will be protected throughout the study. Surveys have been coded to allow followup to non-respondents. If you wish to receive the results of the study, please indicate your desire on the enclosed postcard which may be mailed separately.

If you have questions, please call me at 515-444-3269 (w) or 515-444-7420 (h). Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Martinek  
1412 Bel City Lane  
Belmond, Iowa 50421

Doctoral Student  
Drake University  
Des Moines, Iowa

## Demographical Data

Please complete the following to the best of your knowledge by checking or providing a written response:

In what state is your district located? \_\_\_\_\_

Enrollment size of your district:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25,000 or more   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000 to 1,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10,000 to 24,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 600 to 999     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5,000 to 9,999   | <input type="checkbox"/> 300 to 599     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3,000 to 4,999   | <input type="checkbox"/> 299 and less   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2,000 to 2,999   |   |

Number of schools in your district:

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 or more | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 to 11    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 to 24   | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 to 5     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 to 23   | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 and less |

Grade span of students in the district:

- |                                    |                                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PreK-12   | <input type="checkbox"/> 9-12        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> K-12      | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PreK(K)-8 |                                      |

Type of district:

- ☐ urban  
☐ suburban  
☐ rural

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex:

- ☐ male  
☐ female

Highest educational level:

- ☐ Master's degree  
☐ Superintendent's Certification (6th year program)  
☐ Educational Specialist  
☐ PhD. or Ed.D.

Are you or have you been in the military:

- ☐ yes. If yes, how many years? \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ no

Years of administrative experience:

- In present district as superintendent \_\_\_\_\_  
 In other districts as superintendent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Assistant superintendent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Principal \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Years of classroom teaching experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Average number of hours/week on the job: \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP SURVEY

**Instructions**

The following questions have been designed to gain your perceptions about leadership roles of the superintendency. A "role" is defined as the shared expectation of how an individual team member should behave. Please answer the questions in as much detail as you feel necessary to give a clear picture of your perceptions.

1. Briefly describe up to 10 roles you perform most often as superintendent.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

g.

h.

i.

j.

2. Rank in order from #1 (high) to #5 (low) the 5 roles from Question 1 you consider most important to the successful performance of your job and briefly describe why they are important. In addition, indicate an approximate percentage of time you spend in performing the role.

ROLE	PERCENTAGE OF TIME
1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
5.	_____

3. Of the roles you listed in Question 1, identify the top 5 roles you want to perform in rank order from #1 (high) to #5 (low).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

4. What, if anything, prevents you from performing the roles you want to perform?

5. Briefly describe the roles of an effective, successful superintendent.

6. What, if anything, prevents you from performing the roles described in question 5?

7. Briefly describe two performance areas **most critical** for professional development in the superintendency and state why they are critical.

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a.

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b.

**Please submit a copy of the job description of your position as superintendent, if available.**